

2016

The Analysis and Interpretation of Three Selected Piano Pieces by Chen Yi: Duo Ye, Ba Ban, Ji-Dong-Nuo

Yun-Hui Lai

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, gloria716305@yahoo.com.tw

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lai, Yun-Hui, "The Analysis and Interpretation of Three Selected Piano Pieces by Chen Yi: Duo Ye, Ba Ban, Ji-Dong-Nuo" (2016). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 4376.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/4376

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

THE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THREE SELECTED PIANO
PIECES BY CHEN YI:

DUO YE, BA BAN, JI-DONG-NUO

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

Yun-Hui Lai

B.M., Taipei University of the Arts, 2004

M.M., Chinese Culture University, 2007

May 2017

© Copyright 2017

Yun-Hui Lai

All rights reserved

To my loving parents Shan-Hao Lai and Li-Ming Huang

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my treatise advisor and major professor, Dr. Gregory Sioles. His inspired teaching has expanded my knowledge and repertoire to include contemporary music. Moreover, he helped me transform from a piano player into an artist. His guidance and advice has encouraged me at every stage of the project.

Also, I would like to thank the members of my research committee. Ms. Jan Grimes, my minor teacher, served as a gifted collaborative pianist and her insightful suggestions greatly broadened my horizons. Mr. Michael Gurt and Dr. Dominique Homberger provided very helpful and detailed advice regarding every chapter of my treatise. Furthermore, Dr. Jeffery Perry and Dr. Mikel LeDee gave me many useful suggestions for analyzing music. I appreciate their support not just during the writing of my research paper, but also during the years I studied at Louisiana State University.

In addition, I would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Chen Yi. By generously allowing me access to essential primary source material, I have been able to investigate thoroughly and better understand her sophisticated works.

Without a doubt, I am forever indebted to my parents, whose sacrifice, encouragement, and support sustained my music career since I was five. They continue to inspire me to this today. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to all the people who have assisted me in this journey. Their help has been an invaluable asset to me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER	
1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	1
The Role of Music in Chinese Society, 1949 through the 1980s.....	1
2. CHEN YI'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	9
3. <i>DUO YE</i>	14
Overview.....	14
Analysis.....	18
Performer's Interpretation.....	36
4. <i>BA BAN</i>	40
Overview.....	40
Analysis.....	45
Performer's Interpretation.....	58
5. <i>JI-DONG-NUO</i>	62
Overview	62
Analysis.....	63
Performer's Interpretation.....	73
6. CONCLUSION.....	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	78
VITA.....	81

LIST OF THE TABLES

Table	Page
1. The explanation of “The Sum of Eight” structure.....	17
2. The formal structure of <i>Duo Ye</i>	19
3. The rhythmic compensation between two voices in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 1–17.....	21
4. The rhythmic compensation between two voices in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 20–27.....	24
5. The rhythmic pattern between the two voices in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 116–119.....	32
6. Formal structure of <i>Ba Ban</i>	45
7. Formal structure of <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i>	64

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. The structure of “The Golden Olive”	18
2. The symmetrical contour in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 5–6.....	20

LIST OF EXAMPLES

Example	Page
1. The melody of Chinese folk dance.....	15
2. Motives 1 and 2 in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 1-6.....	16
3. Motive 3 in <i>Duo Ye</i> , measure 71.....	16
4. Motives 1 and 2 in <i>Duo Ye</i> , m. 1-6.....	20
5. Chen Yi's favorite pattern.....	21
6. The application of "The Sum of Eight" in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 1-17.....	22
7. The rhythmic pattern in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 20-27.....	23
8. Motivic intervals apply in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 28-34.....	23
9. The percussive imitation in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 47-51.....	25
10. Motive 3 in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 71.....	25
11. The application of "The Golden Olive" in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 71.....	26
12. The application of "The Golden Olive" in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 72.....	27
13. Section D in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 73-76.....	28
14. The antiphonal pattern in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 86-98.....	29
15. Section E in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 115.....	30
16. The application of "The Sum of Eight" and the alternating voices in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 116-119.....	31
17. Ostinato in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 120-121.....	32
18. Ostinato in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 128-133.....	33
19. Coda section in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 134-143.....	34
20. Rhythmic diminution of <i>ostinato</i> in <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 142-168.....	35

21. Ending of <i>Duo Ye</i> , mm. 176–178.....	36
22. The musical phrases and rhythmic combination of <i>Ba Ban</i>	41
23. Pitch material 1: <i>Ba Ban</i> folk tune.....	44
24. Pitch material 2: twelve-tone row.....	44
25. Pitch material 3: an ascending five-note motive.....	45
26. Theme in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 1–12.....	46
27. Pitch material 2 and 3 in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 14–16.....	47
28. Parallel perfect fourths and fifths in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 18–29.....	47
29. The first climax in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 45–48.....	48
30. Transition 1 in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 48–52.....	49
31. Complete pitch material 2 in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 62–63.....	49
32. The first variation in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 64–70.....	50
33. The pentatonic phrase in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 81–85.....	51
34. Variation 2 in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 112–118.....	52
35. Two leaping sequences in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 154–156.....	53
36. Variation 3 in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 157–162.....	53
37. The fusion of three pitch materials in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 175–179.....	54
38. Application of the first six terms of the Fibonacci sequence in the <i>ostinato</i> in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 193–222.....	56
39. The fusion of three pitch materials at the end of variation 3 in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 223– 232.....	57
40. Coda in <i>Ba Ban</i> , mm. 233–257.....	58
41. Folk tune of <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i>	63
42. Main theme in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 1–13.....	65

43. A short bridge connects to section B in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 14–17.	66
44. Motive 1 in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , measure 18.....	66
45. Inversion of motive 1 in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , measure 27.....	67
46. Motive 2 in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 22–23.....	67
47. Motive 3 in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 43–46.....	68
48. Combination of motives 1 and 2 in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 62–67.....	68
49. Inversion of motive 3 in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 86–88.....	69
50. Variation of motive 4 in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , measure 80.....	69
51. Motive 4 in transition section in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 89–90.....	70
52. Section B ¹ in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 102–106.....	70
53. Link in Section B ¹ in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 131–132.....	71
54. Motive 5 in section D in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 136–137.....	72
55. Coda in <i>Ji-Dong-Nuo</i> , mm. 157–169.....	73

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is intended to contribute to the ongoing study of three selected piano pieces written by the contemporary Chinese American composer Chen Yi. These three works—*Duo Ye* (1984), *Ba Ban* (1999), and *Ji-Dong-Nuo* (2005)—respectively represent her early, middle, and recent periods. Also, they show Chen's diverse and sophisticated compositional style as it evolved from her conservatory years to her current position as a mature and successful composer.

The written portion consists of six chapters. The first chapter will provide the historical background information on the dramatic changes in musical trends in China during the second half of the twentieth century. These historical changes brought Chen more in touch with folk music and gave her a deeper appreciation for it. A sketch of Chen's life is presented in chapter two. Relevant biographical details will highlight the composer's conservatory training that exposed her, in particular, to Bartók, thereby shaping her own pianistic and compositional style. The individual analysis and interpretation of the three selected piano compositions will be presented in chapters three through five. These chapters will show how she has adapted the essence of Chinese folk tunes to her work. At the same time, her use of Western contemporary compositional techniques in the three pieces will be discussed. The last chapter sums up and organizes each chapter's results.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Role of Music in Chinese Society, 1949 through the 1980s

On October 1, 1949, the Communist Party of China achieved nationwide victory. The leader of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong (1893–1976), immediately set out to establish a totalitarian political system of national integration. The Party's desire to exert greater political control over the country's vast territories became the central issue. As a result, revolutionary songs became effective tools by which the regime was able to incrementally spread its communist ideology and indoctrinate the Chinese people.

The only state-sanctioned music organization, the China National Association of Music, was founded in 1949 and later renamed the Chinese Musicians' Association. Although it claimed to be a voluntary unit, its members had little artistic freedom. Musicians not belonging to the organization were forbidden to compose music; the only legal way to do so was through membership in the Association. The regime pushed the Party's Marxist-Leninist ideology on composers in an effort to have these values reflected in the music. The freedom of creative composing was completely eliminated.¹ The driving force behind the revolutionary music system was Mao's speech at the Forum on Literature and Art in Yan'an in 1942. There, he asserted the notion of communist ideological supremacy over music and firmly established the idea that "art serves for the workers; artists should combine with peasants and soldiers."² Thus, musicians should minimize personal feelings in their compositions. Also, according to Mao, musical works

¹ Xun-Chen Guo, "Chinese Revolutionary Music System after 1949," *21st Century Bimonthly: Humanities World* 52 (April 1999): 119.

² Ibid., 120.

were obliged to reveal the revolutionary struggle of the masses and the new life of the socialist era. Otherwise they would be deemed products of capitalism and thus considered useless.

By the beginning of the 1950s, revolutionary songs had become commonplace. These included “Sing to the Motherland,” a song by Xin Wang; *The Dance of Xin Jiang* for orchestra and *Children’s Suite* for piano solo by Shan-De Ding; *The Song of the Forest* for orchestra by Si-Cong Ma; *Spring Festival Overture* for orchestra by Huan-Zhi Li; and the opera *Liu Hu-Lan* by Ke Ma.³ However, just as the era of revolutionary songs had reached its zenith, many composers were faced with internal crises. Musicians grew frustrated composing music that had a single, rigid revolutionary style meant only for public consumption. As a result, some started to use various methods to refine their musical skills and pursue a diversity of musical expression.

In 1954, the vice-chairman of the Chinese Musicians’ Association, Lu-Ting He, announced that “the musical requirement of people is not only for songs and marches praising heroes, but also the people need a variety of music which [can] express their own proper feelings. If all critics set the same frame to apply to every musical work, this action will hinder the normal development of music. In fact, it also will deprive the people of their rights to demand songs of various tastes.”⁴ These statements excited many musicians, who consequently asked the regime to relax its control over music.

Later, in June 1956, Mao promoted a broader guideline for cultural development called The Hundred Flowers Campaign. He agreed that musicians were constrained by creative themes imposed by the government to promote the regime’s policies. Two months later, when Mao met the person in charge of the Chinese Musicians’ Association, the party leader stated that

³ Songwen Li, “East Meets West: Nationalistic Elements in Selected Piano Solo Works of Chen Yi” (PhD diss., University of North Texas, 2001), 6.

⁴ Guo, “Chinese Revolutionary Music System after 1949,” 121.

musicians should learn and perform more music from the West and other foreign countries.⁵ The atmosphere was therefore much changed for composers and performers.

The Hundred Flowers Campaign did not only impact musicians; it was indeed a nationwide movement affecting political, social, and cultural realms. At the same time, Mao was criticized by many intellectuals about his efforts to build a new China. Mao, recognizing that some critics held great sway within the Party, was fearful of losing his political power. Therefore, in an attempt to squash public criticism of himself and the Party, he rescinded The Hundred Flowers Campaign and replaced it with the more severe Anti-Rightist Movement.⁶

This new agenda negatively impacted musicians as soon as it was implemented in the summer of 1957. The harshest critics, such as Xue-An Liu⁷ and Yuan-Luo Huang,⁸ were deeply involved in the class struggle, and they along with hundreds of thousands of other intellectuals were sent to factories, prisons, or rural areas to perform physical labor and to be re-educated. The regime vigorously criticized the bourgeois ideology harbored by some musicians. They were instructed instead to reinforce the virtues of communism through their music.

After stemming much of the criticism in the country, Mao began to execute a series of political maneuvers in 1958, including the misguided Great Leap Forward. The campaign had lofty goals, which, in part, caused manufacturers of goods to exaggerate their production. They falsely reported production figures related to items like food and steel to please the Party, thereby

⁵ Ibid., 122.

⁶ According to Mao's definition, a Rightist was a counter-Revolutionary who opposed revolution, specifically those who worked to overturn revolution, in full or in part.

⁷ Jheng Jhu, *The Anti-Rightist Movement*, vol. 2 (Taipei: Showwe International Co., 2013), 110.

⁸ Ibid., 333.

convincing Mao to set even higher goals and thus creating a vicious cycle.⁹ The government forced people to leave their work to build steelmaking furnaces and participate in the refining process. Mao also required people to bring metal objects from their homes to be melted in the furnaces in an effort to edge China's steelmaking industry closer to that of the United Kingdom and the United States. Immature technology and exaggerated reports created waste and pollution, both of which played a role in causing the Great Chinese Famine.¹⁰ This disaster brought about hundreds of thousands of deaths due to starvation. Things grew so dire that there were even reports of cannibalism.¹¹

In this social environment, the totalitarian regime urgently needed revolutionary songs to use as government propaganda. The contents and model of these nationalistic musical compositions were almost all the same, yet in spite of the strict government supervision, musicians still strove to create pieces that possessed relatively high artistic sophistication. Examples included *Mermaid* for ballet by Zu-Qiang Wu and Ming-Xin Du; *The Youth Piano Concerto* by Shi-Kun Liu and Xiao-Fei Huang; *Red Guards on Honghu Lake* for opera by Jian-An Zhang, Ben-He Zhu, and Qian-Shu Ouyang; *The Butterfly Lovers* for violin concerto by Gang Chen and Zhan-Hao He; and *Mongolia Minor* for cello by Hu-Guang Xin.¹²

As Mao's political initiatives began to founder during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the regime grew less interested in controlling all aspects of public music. Musicians took the opportunity to expose the public to Western classical and light music through performances and

⁹ Jing-Shang Yang, "The Food Problem during the Great Leap Forward," *21st Century Bimonthly: Humanities World* 110 (December 2008): 50.

¹⁰ Jing-Shang Yang, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958–1962* (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 2007), 469.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹² Ching-chih Liu, *A Critical History of New Music in China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2009), 351.

books such as *Two Hundred Foreign Folk Songs*. The purpose was to advocate the depoliticized nature of music, making revolutionary songs unpopular for a short while. The totalitarian regime became increasingly panicked and felt challenged by what seemed to be an outright revolt by musicians. Now believing revolutionary songs critical to its larger mission, the regime decided to rule music with an iron fist. In 1963, as Mao's attempts to transform China were proving largely unsuccessful, the chairman announced that the country's approach to the arts, including music, needed to be rethought.¹³ The regime thought that many musicians did not adhere to Party policy, and did not reflect the reforms and new direction of Mao's socialist vision. To be associated with music was to be labeled a Revisionist.¹⁴

In 1964, the Central Propaganda Department determined that public music was in need of serious reform, and it required that leaders of culture and arts associations—including all members of the Chinese Musicians' Association—participate in a Rectification Conference. It noted that music presses published more than seven hundred thousand copies of *Two Hundred Foreign Folk Songs*, spreading the thoughts and feelings of the bourgeoisie and corrupting young students. Thus, all schools were prohibited from performing Western music. In addition, the Central Propaganda Department organized cadres to re-indoctrinate musicians with Marxist-Leninist ideology and Mao's core teachings. These measures attempted to control musicians' work from composition to the stage. It was totally opposite from the education-oriented strategies of years' previous.¹⁵ As a result, some musical works, such as the music dramas *The*

¹³ Guo, "Chinese Revolutionary Music System after 1949," 122.

¹⁴ Revisionism, as it relates to Communism, is synonymous with being traitorous.

¹⁵ Guo, "Chinese Revolutionary Music System after 1949," 122–23.

East Is Red and *The Legend of the Red Lantern*,¹⁶ which had special political goals, were frequently performed.

From 1966 to 1976, Mao instituted the policies of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, once again returning China back to a dark era of tyrannical dictatorship. If any institution or any person failed to embrace the objectives of Mao and the Gang of Four¹⁷—even their taste in art works was to be unquestioned—they would be overruled or overthrown. One of the members of the Gang of Four, Wen-Yuan Yao, strongly condemned Claude Debussy and French Impressionism as anti-Revolutionary and the most decadent expression of music.¹⁸ All works were banned except Mao's quotations and literary book, Lu Xun's *Complete Works*, Cao Xueqin's *Dream of the Red Chamber*, songs praising the Cultural Revolution, and the notorious Eight Model Operas¹⁹ of Qing Jiang. All schools were ordered to disband classes.²⁰ Worse, the Red Guards²¹ were acting as Mao's informers and causing factional disputes among the masses. They destroyed historical sites, temples, churches, and burned books and antiques. They also searched homes, and tortured, insulted, and beat up intellectuals in public.²² The only laws or rules were those of Mao's Red Guards. Countless people were killed or committed suicide. This inhumane era ended with the death of Mao in 1976. The members of the Gang of Four were

¹⁶ Li, "East Meets West," 7.

¹⁷ A faction composed of Communist Party officials, the group controlled political power organs during the later phases of the Cultural Revolution. The members were Qing Jiang, Wen-Yuan Yao, Hong-Wen Wang, and Chun-Qiao Zhang. Qing Jiang was Mao's wife.

¹⁸ Liu, *A Critical History of New Music in China*, 432.

¹⁹ These included five revolutionary modern Beijing Operas: *The Talking of the Tiger Mountain*, *Legendary Voluntary Army*, *The Legend of the Red Lantern*, *Shajiabang*, and *The Harbor*. The two revolutionary modern ballets were *Red Detachment of Women* and *White-Haired Girl*. And the revolutionary orchestra was *Shajiabang*.

²⁰ Liu, *A Critical History of New Music in China*, 429.

²¹ The Red Guards were not a national military but a specific group of people who were dogmatic Communists. Most were students in post-secondary schools, but some were the children of workers, soldiers, or farmers.

²² Hong-Biao Yin, "Two Major Trends of the Red Guard Movement," *21st Century Bimonthly: Humanities World* 13 (October 1992): 28.

immediately placed under arrest, some receiving lengthy prison terms and others sentenced to death.

After the Cultural Revolution, the economy of the People's Republic of China was on the verge of collapse, and the power of the Communist Party was temporarily curtailed. In 1978, Deng Xiao-Ping assumed power and instituted reforms in response to Mao's perceived failures. He denounced the Cultural Revolution and instead advocated a more pragmatic version of communism focused on economic success through programs such as the Cat Theory²³ and Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.²⁴ As Chinese people began to discuss and reassess Mao's legacy, the once all-powerful leader was no longer universally deified. By 1981, the central government formally admitted that the Cultural Revolution was a mistake, blaming Mao for the suffering it caused.

Chairman Deng's reforms opened China's door to the outside world—especially to certain Western countries like the United States—and modernized Chinese industry and society. This more open attitude was also reflected in the cultural realm. In music, between 1977 and 1980, Wenchung Chou,²⁵ a visiting composition professor at Columbia University, returned to China with musical materials, including books, scores, and recordings, triggering the beginnings

²³ Deng's maxim states that "Whether a cat is black or white, if it can catch mice, it is a good cat." In other words, an individual's revolutionary fervor matters less than his or her capacity to aid the socialist economy.

²⁴ Yao-Ting Dai, *Constitutionalism in China: To See Chinese Constitutional Development from the Modernization and Culture Transformation*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 106.

²⁵ Wenchung Chou (b. 1923) is a groundbreaking Chinese American composer, scholar, and teacher in contemporary American music. He received an engineering degree in China and then went to Yale University to study architecture in 1946. After just one week, he changed his mind and enrolled at the New England Conservatory to study composition with Carl McKinley, Nicolas Slonimsky, and others. When he moved to New York, he took private lessons from Edgard Varèse from 1949 to 1954. Also, he received a Master's degree in composition in 1954 at Columbia University under Otto Luening's guidance. Between 1955 and 1957, he directed a research program on classical Chinese music and drama at Columbia. His music was informed by many topics, such as philosophy, Western contemporary music, Chinese historiography, and Varèse's music. He was the former director of the Ph.D. degree in composition at the Columbia University School of the Arts and the vice president of the Columbia College of Arts. In 1978, he founded the American-Chinese Arts Exchange Association to help talented Chinese young composers, such as Zhou Long, Chen Yi, and Tan Dun, to study abroad. He is considered a mentor to a group of younger composers who created a new approach synthesizing Eastern and Western music.

of New Wave music in the country.²⁶ These items were quickly spread to music conservatories around China. Musicians and students, many of whom were inspired by this new genre, finally had direct contact with twentieth-century Western music.²⁷ By the 1980s, this favorable environment cultivated a group of musicians who created a new composing style based on New Wave music theory. These composers pursued a musical spirit that celebrated the national character in their compositions. Some representative works were *Song of Ch'in* for string quartet by Zhou Long; *Mong Dong* for mixed ensemble by Xiaosong Qu; *Horizon* for soprano and orchestra by Xiaohang Ye; *Violin Concerto* by Wenjing Guo, *Fuga Song* for string quartet by Tan Dun; and *Dou Ye* for piano solo by Chen Yi.²⁸

However popular among musicians in China, New Wave gained more attention and interest outside the country. The reason may be because the masses in China were hesitant to readily accept the content and the sound of the genre.²⁹ Therefore, in the late 1980s, many New Wave composers migrated overseas to look for economic opportunities and to further develop as artists.

²⁶ The most important feature of New Wave music was musicians' use of innovative techniques borrowed from modern Western compositions.

²⁷ Li, "East Meets West," 13.

²⁸ Ibid., 14.

²⁹ Liu, *A Critical History of New Music in China*, 682.

CHAPTER 2

CHEN YI'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Chen Yi³⁰ was born on April 4, 1953, in Guangzhou, China.³¹ Both her parents were medical doctors who were deeply interested in classical music. Her mother played piano at a professional level, and her father played violin with passion. They collected a variety of musical recordings, many of which were played daily in their home. Chen and her siblings began their musical education from an early age. Their parents exposed them to different genres of performance art, such as symphonic concerts, soloist recitals, and ballets from foreign countries, including France, England, and the Soviet Union among others. Chen started piano lessons at age three and violin lessons the following year. She learned so quickly that she could play all of the standard classical music repertoire in short time. Later on, during her teenage years, her father invited Zheng Zhong to teach Chen music theory and Chinese folk songs. Zheng reminded Chen that as a Chinese person, she should have a better understanding of her country's culture, and that she should embrace that tradition and share it with more people. His teaching provided her with a stable music theory foundation, and his words deeply impressed her and influenced her whole life.³²

When Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution in the mid-1960s, millions of people, including Chen and her family, were targeted as intellectuals with ties to Western culture. At first, Chen only could practice violin and piano in secret, playing her violin with a mute and stuffing blankets in her piano to dampen sound. But by 1968, when she was fifteen years old, she

³⁰ Chen is her family name and Yi is her first name. She continued to use the Chinese form of her name after coming to the United States.

³¹ Guangzhou is the third largest Chinese city and the largest in south central China.

³² John de Clef Piñeiro, "An Interview with Chen Yi," *The New Music Connoisseur: The Magazine Devoted to the Contemporary Music Scene* 9, no. 4 (December 2001): 28.

and her family were separated and dispersed to various labor camps around the country.³³ With no one left to watch over their home, their possessions were either seized or destroyed.³⁴ Chen's forced labor primarily involved building military fortresses high in China's rural mountains. A routine day involved her carrying 100 pounds of stone and mud up steep inclines more than 20 times. In addition to this work, she grew vegetables and rice. Although she was able to bring her violin with her, the only music she was permitted to play were revolutionary songs.³⁵ While Chen's captors did not allow her to practice the songs of her choice during those years of suffering, she did gain firsthand knowledge of wilder life and the music of her motherland.

In 1970, Chen received permission to return to her hometown, where she began serving as concertmistress of the local Beijing Opera troupe. State officials were eager for Chen to assist with the upcoming performance of Qing Jiang's Eight Model Operas, one of the few art works permitted during the Cultural Revolution. Although these works were derived from the traditional Beijing opera, the accompaniment was symphonic, and normally combined traditional Western and Chinese instruments.³⁶ Here, Chen dedicated more time to the study of traditional Chinese instruments and learned how to play the *Nguyen*.³⁷ She stayed at that post for eight years and greatly expanded her musical knowledge while there.

The Cultural Revolution ended in 1976 upon Mao's death. College entrance exams—which had been replaced by a system that relied on student recommendations from villages, factories, and military leaders under Mao's regime—were finally restored the following year. After intense competition, Chen was among the first composition students allowed entrance into

³³ Michael Murphy, "Chen Yi: Composing to Honor Her Past," *The Choral Journal: American Choral Directors Association* 53, no. 2 (September 2012): 30.

³⁴ Piñeiro, 28.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁶ Li, "East Meets West," 18.

³⁷ A traditional Chinese plucking instrument. Also known as Ruan Xian or Ruan Qin.

the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1978. Her talented classmates included Zhou Long, Tan Dun, Sola Liu, Wenjing Guo, Xiaogang Ye, Qigang Chen, Xiaofu Zheng, and Qiaosong Qu.³⁸ All had experienced the hardships inflicted by the Cultural Revolution, and all developed a deep appreciation for contemporary Western music. This group would go on to become the founding members of China's New Wave music in the 1980s.

During Chen's conservatory years, she received systematic training for composition from Zuqiang Wu, including harmony, orchestration, form and analysis, and counterpoint. Also, she researched traditional Chinese art forms. She studied folk songs from more than fifty different ethnic Chinese minority groups, learned Chinese opera and instrumental music, and researched the performance of musical storytelling.³⁹ Furthermore, as a part of her academic study, Chen went to the Chinese countryside with her classmates to collect folk songs, learning how to record and transcribe them in the style of the pioneering composer and pianist Béla Bartók.⁴⁰ At this point, Chen came to better appreciate the value and beauty of the folk music native to her home country.

Another important turning point for Chen came when she, along with five other students, was selected to train with visiting professor Alexander Goehr⁴¹ from the University of Cambridge. Music teachers from nine conservatories in China sat in on the class.⁴² Goehr's

³⁸ Chung He, "Famous Chinese Female Composer: Chen Yi," *Mirror News*, December 22, 2014.

³⁹ Piñeiro, "An Interview with Chen Yi," 29.

⁴⁰ Liang King, "Write a Dream of Homeland: Interview with Chinese-American Female Composer Chen Yi," *Ming Pao Monthly* 36, no. 8 (Aug. 2001): 37.

⁴¹ A composer of German birth, Goehr has been recognized as a leading figure of avant-garde music in London. His compositions have been performed by some of the world's leading performers, including the conductors Boulez, Dohnányi, Doráti, Haitink, Knussen, Ozawa, and Rattle.

⁴² Li, "East Meets West," 20.

lectures focused on various musical genres of the twentieth century, and his intensive composition classes showed his individual use of serial techniques.⁴³

Chen finished her bachelor's degree in 1983 at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. Three years later she became the first woman composer in China to receive a master's degree in composition.⁴⁴ Her compositions won many competitions and prizes in China. Her famous piano solo piece *Duo Ye* received first prize in the China National Composition Competition in 1985. Shortly after, she was commissioned to write an orchestral version of the piece for the Central Philharmonic Orchestra for its tour of the United States in 1987. The premiere was at Avery Fisher Hall in New York and garnered great acclaim.⁴⁵

After graduating from the Central Conservatory of Music, Chen traveled to the United States to continue her studies in composition with professors Wenchung Chou and Mario Davidovsky⁴⁶ at Columbia University in New York City. She loved the music of Bartók, Debussy, Stravinsky, Lutoslawski, Messiaen, Shostakovich, Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and many other twentieth-century composers. The concepts of dissonant intervals and noise not only inspired Chen and expanded her compositional palette, but complex rhythmic organizations also influenced her. Chen was drawn to contemporary ideas like the twelve-tone tonality used by Berg and the vocal technique *Sprechstimme* made popular by Schoenberg.⁴⁷ She received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1993 and went on to establish a successful professional career. Theodore Presser Company, the oldest music publisher in the United States, publishes her

⁴³ Feng Li, "The Combination of National Music Elements and Modern Composing Technique: The Study of the Creative Style of Chen Yi's Piano Lute *Duo Ye*" (M.D. thesis, Northwest Normal University, 2012), 14.

⁴⁴ Piñeiro, "An Interview with Chen Yi," 29.

⁴⁵ Liu, *A Critical History of New Music in China*, 577.

⁴⁶ An American composer of Argentine birth, Davidovsky is well known for his electro-acoustic compositions, such as his series of works titled *Synchronisms*.

⁴⁷ Piñeiro, "An Interview with Chen Yi," 30.

compositions, and she has received numerous commissions from performers and orchestras, including Yehudi Menuhin, Yo-Yo Ma, Evelyn Glennie, BBC, Cleveland Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Rascher Saxophone Quartet, Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, and Orchestra of St. Luke's.⁴⁸

As a distinguished educator and a prolific composer, Chen served on the composition faculty of the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore from 1996 to 1998. Since then, she has served as a professor of musical composition at the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri–Kansas City. Among her countless awards, it is worth mentioning that she was the recipient of the prestigious Charles Ives Living award in 2001, bestowed by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Moreover, she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2005,⁴⁹ and was a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her orchestral work *Si Ji (Four Seasons)*.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ See the Theodore Presser Web site, which includes Chen's biography: www.presser.com/composer/chen-yi.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Timothy Stulman, "A Cultural Analysis of Chen Yi's *Si Ji (Four Seasons)* for Orchestra," (PhD diss., Bowling Green State University, 2010), 2.

CHAPTER 3

DUO YE

Overview

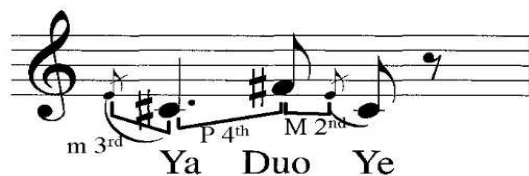
The inspiration for *Duo Ye* came during Chen Yi's conservatory years. In 1980, she travelled from Beijing to Guangxi⁵¹ province with a group of composers to study the folk tunes of the Dong and Yao ethnic groups. To welcome Chen and her colleagues, the modest people of the Dong minority joyfully sang and danced. Chen was deeply touched by this enthusiastic and convivial scene.⁵² What an unforgettable moment!

At this exciting event, the Dong people performed a traditional form of dance music: Duo Ye. In traditional Dong celebrations, there is an alternation between a solo singer and chorus which is clearly reflected in Chen's work. These two syllables were originally meaningless words that were improvised by the lead singer, who sang the first short phrase in music: Ya Duo Ye (Ex. 3.1). Meanwhile, other performers gathered in a circle around a bonfire and sang the answering phrase in response to the lead singer. They started by dancing with slow steps. The cantor and the chorus alternated several times with the tempo gradually increasing. Finally, the celebration ended in a vibrant atmosphere.⁵³

⁵¹ Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in southern China.

⁵² Li, "The Combination of National Music Elements," 16.

⁵³ Chen Yi, "Tradition and Creation," *Current Musicology*, no. 67/68 (Fall 1999): 61.



Example 3.1. The melody of Chinese folk dance.⁵⁴

Chen composed *Duo Ye* for solo piano in 1984, four years after her visit to Guangxi. It was premiered by the composer's sister Chen Min in Beijing a year later. The same year, the composition was awarded first prize at the China National Composition Competition.⁵⁵ Chen also adapted *Duo Ye* in three different versions,⁵⁶ including one for chamber orchestra, one for full orchestra, and one for the pipa, a Chinese traditional instrument.⁵⁷ What follows is a discussion focused on the piano solo version.

Although *Duo Ye* is a short and streamlined piano piece, its design is as sophisticated as that of a Swiss clock. Chen carefully arranged each element after considerable deliberation and drew great inspiration from the basic intervallic unit of a Chinese folk tune to create the entire composition. Chen's composing technique for *Duo Ye*, which relies on using small cells, can be traced back to one of the most renowned composers of the Classical era—Beethoven.

According to Chen, she took the intervallic relationship shown in Example 3.1 as pitch material. These three intervals are constituted by a minor third (E-C[#]), a perfect fourth (C[#]-F[#]), and a major second (F[#]-E). These three motives are all closely related and all developed from the primitive pitch material for different functions in the piece. The first motive is in the treble clef, which represents the singing of the cantor in the beginning (Ex. 3.2). The second motive, which

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Vai-Meng Lei, "Three Pieces by Contemporary Chinese Composers: Lam Bun-Ching, Chen Yi and Zhou Long" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1990), 40.

⁵⁶ Li, "East Meets West," 31.

⁵⁷ The pipa is also called the Chinese zither or the Chinese lute.

is in the bass clef (Ex. 3.2), represents the dancing rhythmic chorale used as an accompaniment. Finally, the third motive is located in the middle section (Ex. 3.3), and it begins with the upwards minor seventh, which is the intervallic inversion of the major second (this illustrates perfectly her economical use of basic materials). This middle section represents the composer's feelings when she first visited Guangxi province in 1980. In addition, the final motive imitates Beijing Opera tunes as well as the singing style of songs from China's rural mountains.⁵⁸



Example 3.2. Motives 1 and 2 in *Duo Ye*,⁵⁹ mm. 1–6.



Example 3.3. Motive 3 in *Duo Ye*, measure 71.

Chen also designed two rhythmic arrangements that dominate this piece, both of which originated from the Juban Percussion.⁶⁰ These two sophisticated rhythmic organizations are called “The Sum of Eight” and “The Golden Olive.” They follow specific telescopic principles and have their own patterns.

⁵⁸ Chen, “Tradition and Creation,” 61.

⁵⁹ Chen Yi, *Duo Ye* (King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser, 2000), 1.

⁶⁰ Juban Percussion is a type of Chinese traditional percussion ensemble music. It is popular in southern China.

In “The Sum of Eight” rhythmic sequence, there are two voices that comprise a phrase. As the number of the beats of one voice increases, those of the second correspondingly decreases, balancing the number of beats in the phrase (Table 3.1). The total number of beats always adds up to eight, but Chen applies this principle flexibly to achieve any number of beats she desires (Table 3.3).⁶¹

Table 3.1. The explanation of “The Sum of Eight” structure.

	Voice 1	Voice 2	Sum of beats
Phrase 1	7	1	8
Phrase 2	5	3	8
Phrase 3	3	5	8
Phrase 4	1	7	8

The rhythmic pattern of “The Golden Olive” is similar to the shape of the fruit produced by an olive tree. The head and the tail are smaller, and the intermediate is, by proportion, larger. In music, this pattern is that of a short phrase the composer gradually increases to a climax and then decreases to the same short phrase that mirrors the pattern at the beginning (Fig. 3.1).⁶²

⁶¹ Xiaole Li, “Chen Yi’s Piano Music: Chinese Aesthetics and Western Models” (PhD diss., University of Hawaii Library, 2003), 164.

⁶² Qing Nadia Feeken, “The Complete Solo Piano Works of Chen Yi: A Recording, Analysis, and Interpretation” (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2012), 30.

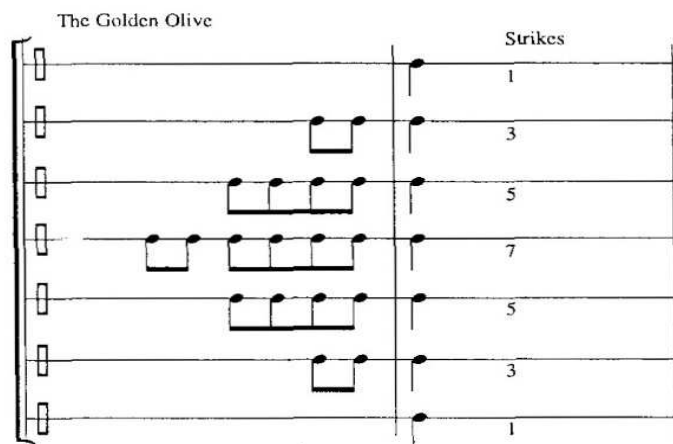


Figure 3.1. The structure of “The Golden Olive.”⁶³

Analysis

The formal structure of *Duo Ye* is similar to that of several other music forms, such as sonata Allegro,⁶⁴ compound ternary,⁶⁵ sectional,⁶⁶ and fantasy or a free rhapsody-like form.⁶⁷ The structure of Chen’s *Duo Ye* is most like the sectional form. There are a total of seven sections, and each features symbolized characters (Table 3.2). To add to the complexity there are also eleven different types of time signatures in *Duo Ye*, and Chen changes them twenty-two times.⁶⁸ Finally, the strong multi-tonality in this piece⁶⁹ creates tension in the music and imitates the sound of the Chinese percussion ensemble.

⁶³ Chen, “Tradition and Creation,” 63.

⁶⁴ Li, “East Meets West,” 32.

⁶⁵ Yi-Jhih Deng, “The Analysis and Performance of Duo Ye,” *Discoveries in Music: Gehai 2* (Spring 2011): 53.

⁶⁶ Feeken, “The Complete Solo Piano Works of Chen Yi,” 24.

⁶⁷ Li, “Chen Yi’s Piano Music,” 176.

⁶⁸ Jie Li, “Structure and Cohesion: The Analysis and ‘Numerical Control’ Rhythm of Chen Yi’s Piano Solo Piece *Duo Ye*” (M.D. thesis, Wuhan Conservatory of Music, 2012), 16.

⁶⁹ Ling-Yun Yang, “The Features of Piano Piece Duo Ye: The Combination of Modern Techniques and the Chinese Traditional Music,” *Huangzhong* 4 (Summer 2002): 39.

Table 3.2. The formal structure of *Duo Ye*.

Section	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Measure	1–27	28–70	71–72	73–114	115	116–133	134–178
Tempo	Largo- Allegro	Allegro	Adagio	Andante	Allegro	Meno mosso	Vivo con animato
Meter	Vary	2/4, 7/8, 4/4, 3/4	Free	4/4, 3/4, 5/8	Free	7/4, 4/4	2/4, 3/4
Rhythm Mode	The Sum of Eight		The Golden Olive			The Sum of Eight	The Sum of Eight

Section A: mm.1-27.

At the outset of *Duo Ye*, Chen utilizes the original theme from the chorus to compose motive 1. The first two notes, E and C[#], represent the improvised call of *Duo Ye* and also are the incomplete motive 1. In measures two to four, the motive 2 is introduced almost immediately on the top of the chords (D-E-G) in the bass clef. The tempo suddenly changes to Allegro and assumes a dance-like feel. The complete set of motive 1 (E- C[#]-F[#]) finally appears in measure five for the first time, and it mirrors the symmetrical contour of the opening phrase when combined with measure six (Ex. 3.4). The melody line is centered in F[#], creating the sequence E- C[#]-F[#]-C[#]-E (Fig. 3.2). Motives 1 and 2 are constituted by the intervals of a minor third, a major second, and the perfect fourth. These intervals appear melodically and harmonically,⁷⁰ unifying the entire composition.

⁷⁰ Li, “East Meets West,” 32.



Example 3.4 Motives 1 and 2 in *Duo Ye*, mm. 1–6.

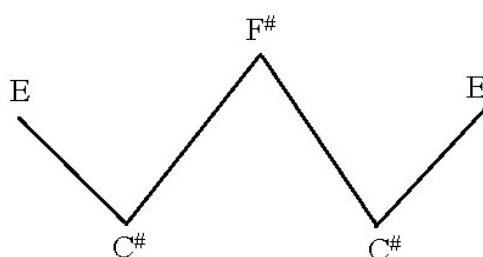


Figure 3.2. The symmetrical contour in *Duo Ye*, mm. 5–6.

Measures 17 to 27 are a transition between sections A and B, starting with a unison melody that forms open octaves. As the singing stops, the melody becomes highly ornamented. The open octaves are the essential features that Chen utilizes to imitate the effect of the ch'in-wu and the erh-wu.⁷¹ These two instruments are the most important ensemble instruments in traditional Beijing Opera, and they always play in unison and form open octaves. Here, Chen uses her self-described favorite pattern (Ex. 3.5) for a transitory passage. The characteristics of this pattern appear here and in the later middle Adagio section, as does her frequent usage of major seconds and ornaments.⁷²

⁷¹ The ch'in-wu and the erh-wu are the primary stringed ensemble instruments in Beijing Opera. Their shape is similar, but they are made of different material. The body of the ch'in-wu is made of bamboo, and the pitch is higher than that of the erh-wu. The body of the erh-wu, on the other hand, is made of hardwood, and the pitch is deeper and more melodious.

⁷² Lei, "Three Pieces by Contemporary Chinese Composers," 46.



Example 3.5. Chen Yi's favorite pattern.⁷³

Furthermore, in section A, Chen embeds a fascinating “The Sum of Eight” rhythmic design in measures 1–17 and 20–27. The music in the treble and bass clefs symbolizes, respectively, the call and response voices. In measures 1–17 (Ex. 3.6), here Chen arrives at a total number of ten rather than eight beats, with the quarter note equal to one beat. As the beats in the upper voice are gradually lengthened, the beats in the lower voice are correspondingly diminished until they comprise the entire phrase (Table 3.3). The phrases start with eighth notes in the second and fourth entries and are considered pickup notes, therefore the first half beats are not counted into the whole phrase. Also, the correct time signature is 5/4 in measure thirteen, and the half note in B^b should be dotted, perhaps this is merely a printer's mistake.⁷⁴ The total beats of these five phrases are 10, 10, 10, 11, and 9, demonstrating Chen's flexible and innovative approach to the principle of “The Sum of Eight.” The average number of beats in these five phrases is 10, and the framework in measures 1–17 reveals this balance.

⁷³ Ibid., 123.

⁷⁴ Li, “East Meets West,” 40.

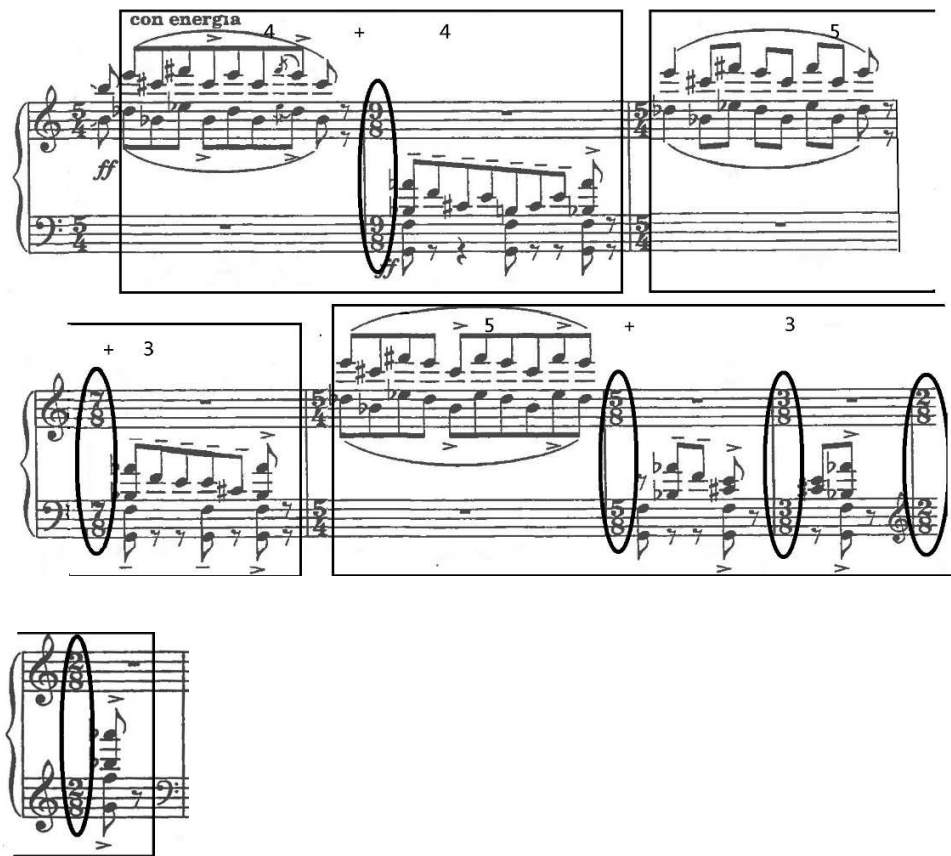
Example 3.6 The application of “The Sum of Eight” in *Duo Ye*, mm. 1–17.

Table 3.3. The rhythmic compensation between two voices in *Duo Ye*, mm. 1–17.

Phrases	Number of beats (cantor)	Number of beats (chorus)	Total beats
I	3	7	10
II	5	5	10
III	7	3	10
IV	8	3	11
V	8	1	9

Chen utilizes yet another free arrangement of “The Sum of Eight” in measures 20–27 (Ex. 3.7). The beats in the call and response voices normally ascend and descend at the same time. However, Chen breaks the regular pattern here and keeps the length of the beats in the upper voice in 5/4 time signature. The beats in the lower voice, on the other hand, are diminished with

the time signatures and altered in the order of 9/8, 7/8, 5/8, 3/8, and 2/8.⁷⁵ This asymmetric design generates the underlying undulation and creates Chen's innovative aesthetic. Since the phrases start with eighth notes in measures 20 and 25 and are considered pickups, the first half beats are not counted into the whole phrase. As a result, the total beats of these three large phrases is eight (Table 3.4).



Example 3.7 The rhythmic pattern in *Duo Ye*, mm. 20–27.

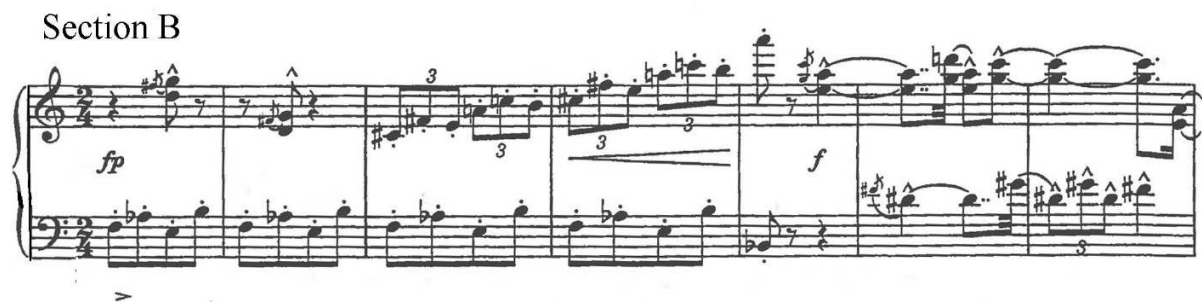
⁷⁵ Chia-Chin Shen, "The Asian Inspiration: Chinese Influences in the Solo Piano Music of Chen Yi" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2011), 45.

Table 3.4. The rhythmic compensation between two voices in *Duo Ye*, mm. 20–27.

Phrases	Number of beats (cantor)	Number of beats (chorus)	Total beats
I	4	4	8
II	5	3	8
III	5	3	8

Section B: mm. 28–70.

In section B, many notes are played staccato. It evokes a more dance-like feel and percussive sonorities. The three motivic intervals discussed previously still dominate in this section, but Chen adds perfect fifths in the bass parts to alternate and enrich the Oriental language of the music (Ex. 3.8).



Example 3.8 Motivic intervals apply in *Duo Ye*, mm. 28–34.

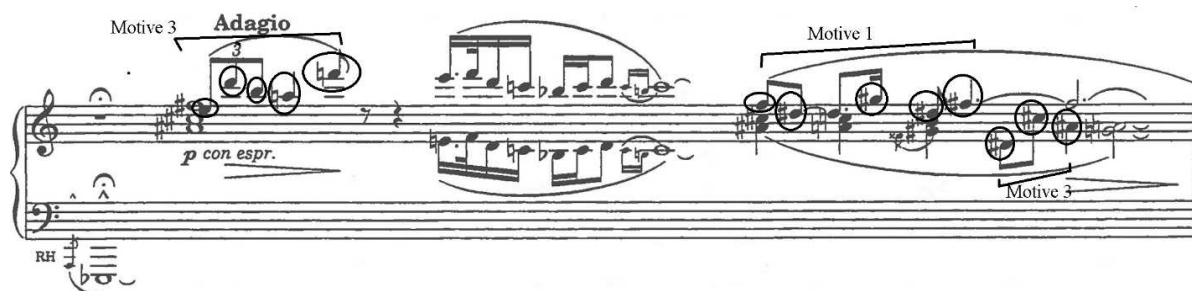
From measure 47, the texture in both voices becomes thicker and more rhythmic (Ex. 3.9). At the same time, motive 2 emerges in the different notes on the top line of those chords (E-F[#]-A). The cluster-like chords imitate and exhibit the festive style of the Chinese traditional percussion ensemble.



Example 3.9 The percussive imitation in *Duo Ye*, mm. 47–51.

Section C: mm. 71–72.

Chen has motive 3 appear in the first few notes on the treble clef, and those constituted intervals are still derived from the original tune.⁷⁶ The beginning interval is a rising minor seventh, and the unique characteristic here, a lift upwards, is not present in those three basic intervals, but as stated previously it is the inversion of the major second (Ex. 3.10).



Example 3.10 Motive 3 in *Duo Ye*, mm. 71.

In this section, the tempo is marked Adagio. It only has two measures constituted by the improvisatory style of cantabile melodies. The dotted bar line at the end of line three is not an

⁷⁶ Chen, “Tradition and Creation,” 61.

actual bar line; its function is merely to create the small gap that separates the shift in musical moods from *con espressione* to *dolce* (Ex. 3.11).⁷⁷ Here, Chen again imitates the interweaving melody of Beijing Opera, using grace notes and the high-pitched sounds found in the songs of China's rural mountains. The ensemble supports the singer's main theme by playing intertwining countermelodies at the same time the singer performs the melody.

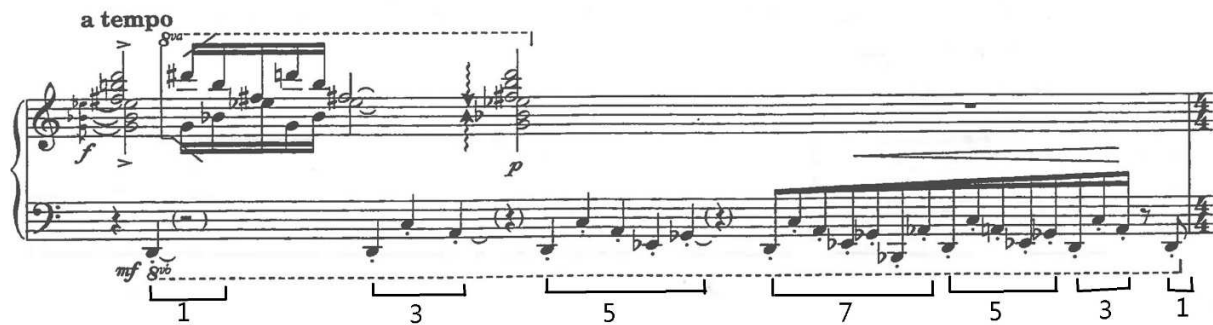
Furthermore, Chen twice applies the rhythmic pattern of “The Golden Olive” in each measure of this Adagio section. In measure 71, the phrase begins with three beats, then it gradually increases to seven and then eight. After arriving at the composer's climatic nine beats, the number of beats then returns to three, a perfect reflection of the olive shape.

The musical score for Duo Ye, mm. 71, is presented in three systems. The first system is marked 'Adagio' and 'p con espr.'. It shows a right hand (RH) and left hand (LH) with a 3-beat phrase, followed by a 6-beat phrase, and then a 7-beat phrase. The second system is marked 'dolce' and 'mf'. It shows a 8-beat phrase, followed by a 9-beat phrase, and then a 3-beat phrase. The third system is marked 'poco rit.'. It shows a 6-beat phrase, followed by a 6-beat phrase, and then a 3-beat phrase. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 3.11 The application of “The Golden Olive” in *Duo Ye*, mm. 71.

⁷⁷ Feeken, “The Complete Solo Piano Works of Chen Yi,” 32.

Chen also utilizes “The Golden Olive” in the bass voice in measure 72 (Ex. 3.12). In this case, the bass note in D plays the first strike of each phrase, making the palindromic shape of the rhythmic pattern even more obvious.



Example 3.12 The application of “The Golden Olive” in *Duo Ye*, mm. 72.

Section D: mm. 73–114.

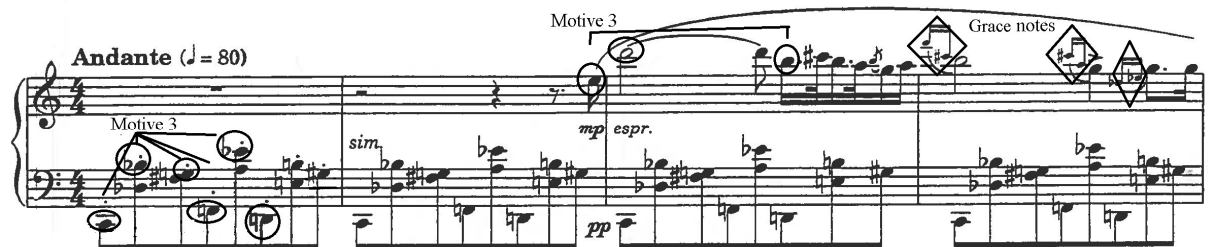
Chen creates a hidden layer and makes an interesting *ostinato* design in section D. The dancing accompaniment (Ex. 3.13) is composed of the repeated twelve-tone staccato pattern. The top notes of these eighth notes present the melodic contour (C-B^b-G-F-E^b-D-B-G[#]), which comes from the third motive (the Beijing Opera motive). Also, the intervallic relationship of the lower pitches constituted by the first (C), fourth (F), and sixth (D) eighth notes can be traced from the first and second motives.⁷⁸ The effect of the lower notes divides the pattern, creating 3+2+3.⁷⁹ This well-designed twelve-note *ostinato* is a wonderful demonstration of the way in which Chen merged the folk tune of *Duo Ye* with Western contemporary technique.⁸⁰ In measure 75, the melody has the same opening notes as section C (E-D-B), but it is embellished with many grace

⁷⁸ Chen, “Tradition and Creation,” 61.

⁷⁹ Lei, “Three Pieces by Contemporary Chinese Composers,” 52.

⁸⁰ Li, “Chen Yi’s Piano Music,” 204.

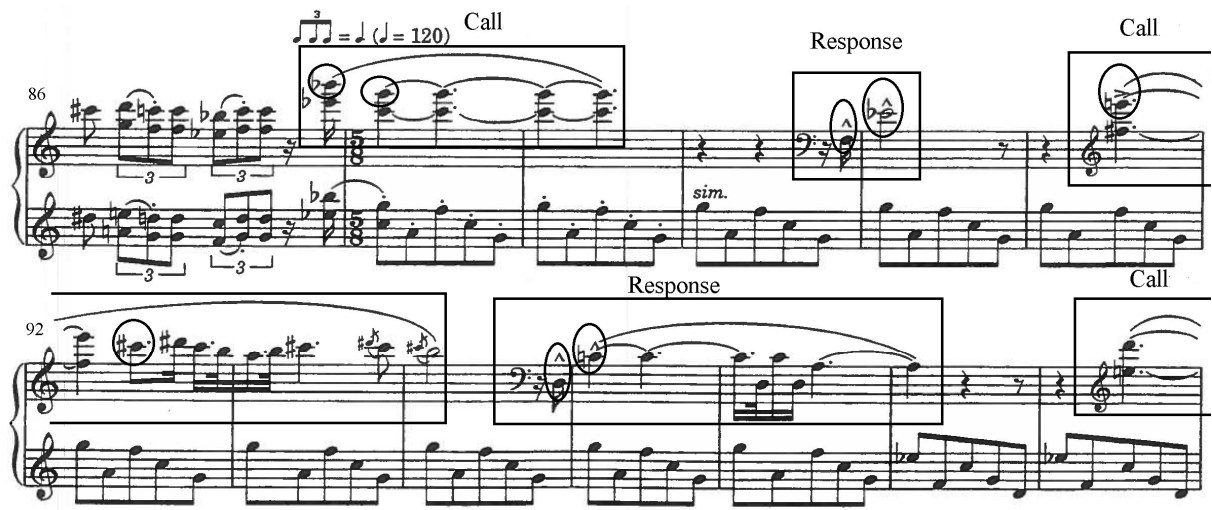
notes creating a *coloratura*-like effect. Again, the technique is reminiscent of the singing style of Beijing Opera.



Example 3.13 Section D in *Duo Ye*, mm. 73–76.

From measure 87 (Ex. 3.14), the time signature changes to the asymmetrical meter of 5/8, and the tempo suddenly becomes much faster. Meanwhile, the call-response phrases occur again, now accompanied by a five-note *ostinato*. The antiphonal pattern is still employed by the motivic intervals.⁸¹ When the upper voice sings a minor third, the lower voice immediately responds with a minor seventh. These two voices repeatedly sing back and forth in the high and low registers at a fast pace that creates a mounting atmosphere of excitement.

⁸¹ Ibid., 205.



Example 3.14 The antiphonal pattern in *Duo Ye*, mm. 86–98.

Section E: mm. 115.

Section E is a transition section (Ex. 3.15) that features *cadenza*-like style. It contains one long measure without a bar line. It starts with the octaves F[#]-D[#] in the high register—recalling the opening in section A— but here those octaves are followed by an echo.⁸² Also, the response in section E is expressed as groups of running sixteenth notes. Some groups, those with a slash in front of them, are treated as grace notes, while the unslashed groups are usually sixteenth running notes.⁸³ The material in the beginning of those groups undoubtedly is drawn from the transposed motivic cells, such as the three notes at the beginning of each group: F-D-G, G-E-A, and B^b-G-C are from motive 1; D-C-A, E-D-B, and G-F-D are from motive 3. Moreover, the first notes of the three groups—F-G-B^b and D-E-G—constitute motive 2.⁸⁴

⁸² Feeken, “The Complete Solo Piano Works of Chen Yi,” 35.

⁸³ Chen, *Duo Ye*, 5.

⁸⁴ Feeken, “The Complete Solo Piano Works of Chen Yi,” 35.

115

Echo

Allegro *

8^{va}.1

Example 3.15 Section E in *Duo Ye*, mm. 115.

Section F: mm. 116–133.

This section is marked *meno mosso*, and the main melody appears again in the bass. However, the cantor and the choir reverse their positions. The call is from a single melodic line in the treble clef that becomes octaves in the bass clef, producing a more spacious sound. At the same time, the response voice in the treble clef changes to syncopated cluster chords. Herein, the

texture is much thicker, and the sonority is majestic and vast, which conjures the festive atmosphere of Chinese percussion ensemble (drums and gongs⁸⁵) in Beijing Opera.

The rhythmic pattern Chen applies here again is “The Sum of Eight” but in a different setting. Unlike the unified beats in section A, the total number of the beats in section F (Ex. 3.16) is inconsistent. As usual, when the beats of the top voice decrease, those of the bottom increase. However the total number of the beats in each of the phrases diminishes (Table 3.5).⁸⁶ The cantor’s call, which starts with the eighth notes in the first entries, is considered a pickup note, meaning only two beats are counted into the whole phrase.

The image shows a musical score for Example 3.16, spanning measures 116 to 119. It consists of two systems. The top system is for piano (piano part) and voice. The piano part has a treble and bass staff. The right hand (RH) plays dense chords, while the left hand (LH) plays a more active line. The voice part is on a single staff. The bottom system continues the piano part. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'ff' (fortissimo). Above the piano part, there are brackets indicating rhythmic groupings with beat counts: 7, 5, 3, 2, 4, and 5. The tempo marking 'Meno mosso' is present at the beginning of the first system.

Example 3.16 The application of “The Sum of Eight” and the alternating voices in *Duo Ye*, mm. 116–119.

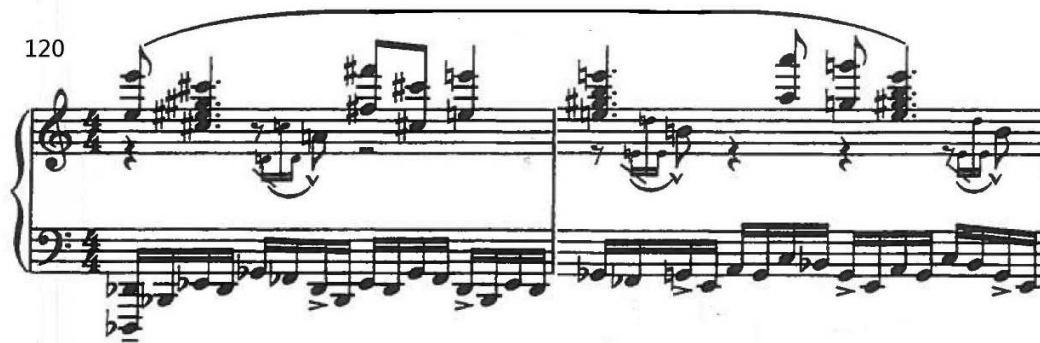
⁸⁵ A gong is a traditional Chinese percussive instrument. It is made of copper and comes in several varieties, such as large gongs, small gongs, and yunluos (sets of small tuned gongs).

⁸⁶ Li, “Chen Yi’s Piano Music,” 207.

Table 3.5. The rhythmic pattern between the two voices in *Duo Ye*, mm. 116–119.

Phrases	Number of beats (treble clef)	Number of beats (bass clef)	Total beats
I	7	2	9
II	5	3	8
III	3	4	7
IV	1	5	6

Between measures 120 and 133 (Ex. 3.17), the *Duo Ye* call changes back to the high register. Also, the accompaniment returns to the bass clef and becomes an *ostinato* with sixteen notes, grouped as six notes and understood by the accent pattern. In addition, the first, the third, and the fifth notes are in *ostinato*, which is concealed in the bass line in this section. These hidden notes, D^b-E^b-G^b, which form the intervallic relationship of motive 2, foreshadow the melodic motive in the coda section.⁸⁷

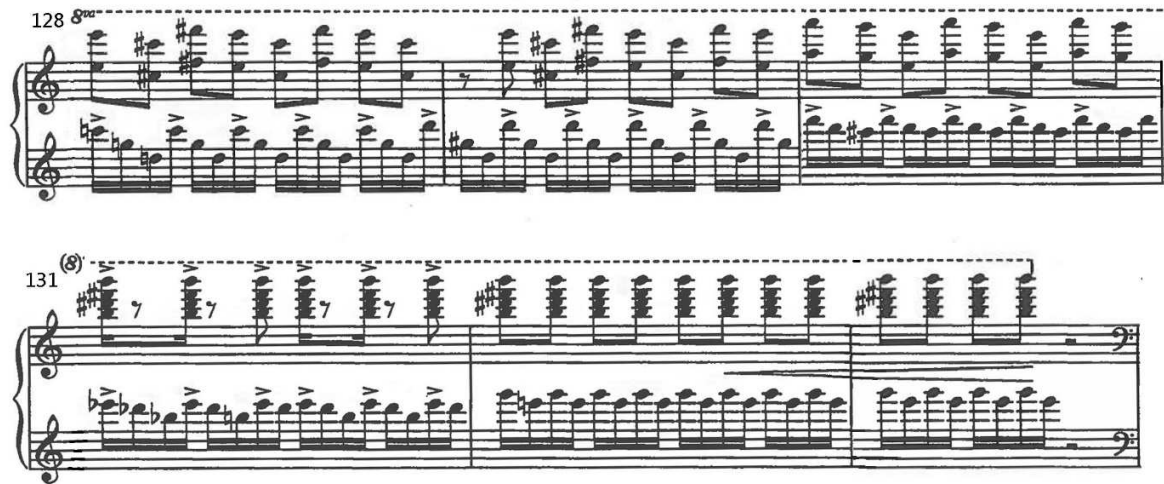


Example 3.17 Ostinato in *Duo Ye*, mm. 120–121.

Starting at measure 128 (Ex. 3.18), the music gradually shifts to a higher register, and the signature remains in duple time. The *ostinato* alternates between six and three notes to a group, as this compact rhythm creates more intensity and a syncopated feel. Finally at measure 132, the number of notes shortens once again to two notes per group before building up to the climax.

⁸⁷ Shen, “The Asian Inspiration,” 53.

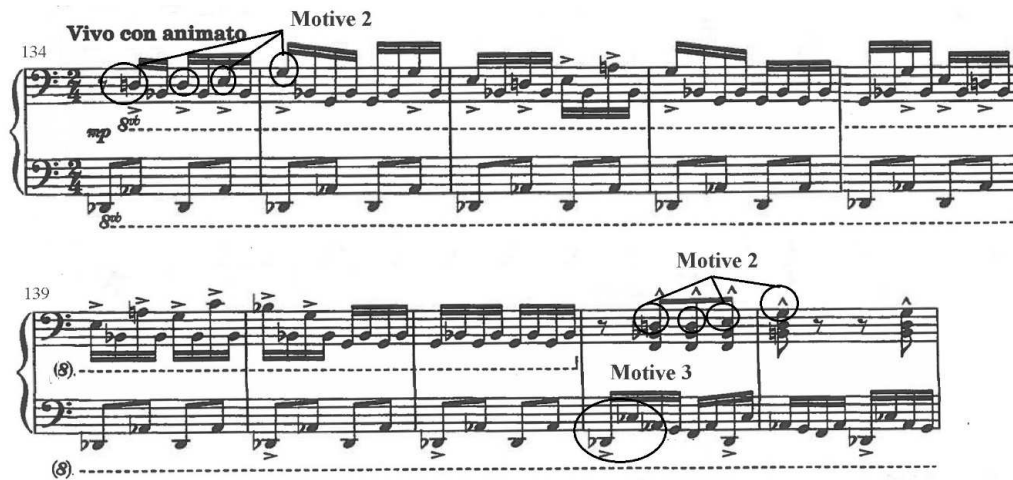
The approach of shortening a rhythmic pattern creates tension and is also a compositional technique commonly utilized by Beethoven.



Example 3.18 Ostinato in *Duo Ye*, mm. 128–133.

Section G: mm. 134–178.

The coda section (Ex. 3.19) is marked *vivo con animato*, and it utilizes the dancing and singing material from motive 2 (D-E-G) to comprise the melody, first appearing in the upper register in accented sixteen notes. Afterwards, while the melody transitions to cluster chords with accents in the right hand, the *ostinato* in the lower register reappears. Also, the first three notes (D^b-C^b-A^b) of the *ostinato*, which starts at measure 142, have the intervallic features from motive 3. Those accents in both voices create the effect of an irregular beat and further enhance the tension in the music leading to the conclusion.



Example 3.19 Coda section in *Duo Ye*, mm. 134–143.

Here, a fascinating rhythmic arrangement featuring “The Sum of Eight” appears by grouping the *ostinato* from measures 142 to 168 (Ex. 3.20). It starts at the group that accents at D^b and repeats eleven times. The accent then moves up to B^b, and this group continues nine times. Mirroring the previous pattern, as the group moves up the accent to the new pitch, the total number of new groups shortens by two each time. The following sequential sets result: F groups seven times, C groups five times, G groups three times, and finally, D groups only once. On the other hand, the melody in the upper voice proceeds in the opposite fashion. Although it is not the exact increasing number sequence responding to *ostinato*, the melody still shows the mature skill and flexibility that Chen demonstrates as she utilizes “The Sum of Eight.”⁸⁸

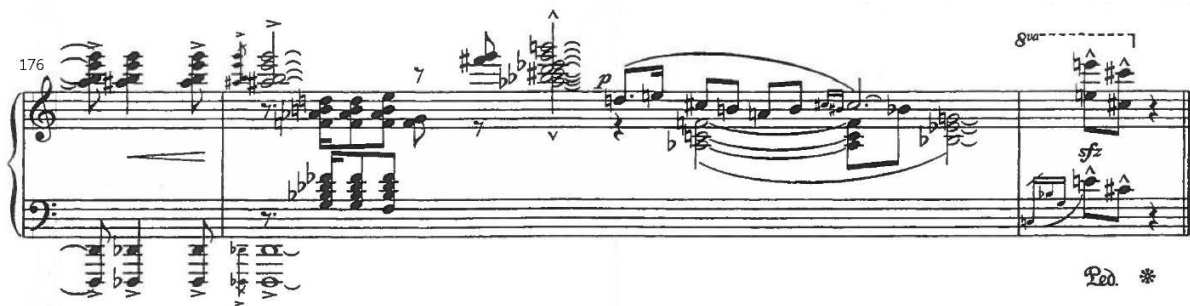
⁸⁸ Li, “Chen Yi’s Piano Music,” 211–212.



Example 3.20 Rhythmic diminution of *ostinato* in *Duo Ye*, mm. 142–168.

At measure 169, both voices turn to join together and create a *toccata*-like motion that imitates the sound of the dulcimer.⁸⁹ After a series of running chords that cover the keyboard, an energetic, high-pitched chord reaches the peak. While the sonority of the peak chord resonates, the beautiful melody—which borrows features from Beijing Opera—from motive 3 appears in a whisper. Before it sinks in, the grace note from motive 3 reappears, and the beginning of *Duo Ye*'s call from motive 1 ends this piece with an arresting *sforzando* accent (Ex. 3.21).

⁸⁹ The dulcimer or yangqin is a stringed musical instrument. It is made of wood and shaped like a butterfly. This instrument originated from ancient Arabian countries and was introduced into China during the Ming Dynasty (1368 to 1644). Later, folk musicians made improvements, and the dulcimer was adopted by Chinese musicians.



Example 3.21. Ending of *Duo Ye*, mm. 176–178.

Performer's Interpretation

Before practicing *Duo Ye*, we should understand its background so we are able to find the essence of this piece. It evokes the lively and joyful scene of the Dong people welcoming a group of their Beijing guests, one of them being Chen Yi, who was deeply impressed by the hospitality of her hosts.

This piece begins antiphonally, with the two voices possessing opposite characteristics. For example, the top voice exhibits a singing style with *forte* volume and in a slow tempo. The bottom voice, though, presents a dance-like rhythm with *pianissimo* volume and in a quick tempo. As a result, the touch on the piano for both voices will be different. On the one hand, in the call part, the touch needs depth created with the finger pad. The wrists should then be pulled up slowly. This action allows the music to travel a greater distance and gives it a capacious feel. On the other hand, in the response section, the touch needs to be light and with the fingertips. Since the volume is low, the wrists can remain steady. Doing so evokes a more precise and percussive feel. Because of the frequent alterations of the two voices, these different touches need to be changed quickly. Also, the accents should be slightly stressed, not played with too

much force. As the piece progresses, the accents marked in the score create different effects in each section and play important roles.

In the music that follows, the antiphonal style is replaced by a homophonic texture. The melody is in the right hand and should be brought out. At first, both hands play *staccato* notes in an agile manner. Starting at measure 47, both hands begin to play tone clusters and depict a lively atmosphere of drums and gongs. The right hand should be voiced out here. The accents are scattered and are occasionally off the beat, creating a busy and chaotic sense of rhythm.

Section C, written in the style of Beijing Opera, symbolizes Chen's journey to Guangxi province and the warm welcome she and her colleagues received from the Dong people. The lively atmosphere then suddenly transforms and becomes more lyrical and expressive. Also, the musical texture is also transformed from vertical harmonies to horizontal melodies. This section has a suggestion of counterpoint with, at most, three melodic lines overlapping. As a result, the *legato* phrases should be treated carefully and each voice should be brought out clearly.

The left hand starts to play an *ostinato*, a twelve-note *staccato* pattern in measure 73. The continuous big jumps by the left hand are particularly difficult for the player. At the same time, the right hand imitates a vocalist singing an expressive mountain song with ample ornamentation. The tempo quickens in measure 87. The *ostinato* changes from 12 notes to five notes and shifts to the treble clef. This is a challenging part to learn, since the right hand jumps over left hand several times and plays the minor seventh on both clefs in a rapid tempo. This is a difficult moment for the pianist to remain in a steady tempo. It evokes an image of two people calling and answering to each other standing on two hills.

In the transition section, in measure 115, the slashed sixteen-note groups have different numbers of notes in each hand. The right hand has eleven notes while the left hand has eight. In addition, since those groups are in the bass area and are played quickly, it is very easy to create a noisy and dirty sound. In order to avoid this, performers should play those groups lightly and cleanly.

Section F is the bombastic climax of the piece which portrays the celebration as it reaches its highest point. The first four bars imitate the sonority of the Chinese percussion ensemble of Beijing Opera. In order to let the sound travel farther and create a magnificent sense of space, the wrists on both hands need to pull up after playing the cluster chords and octaves. Measure 120 is, like measure 73, also difficult to practice. It is one of the most challenging passages in the work, and requires independent thinking for each hand. When the left hand plays *ostinato* and gradually shifts the register upwards, the right hand plays Duo Ye's call. Those accents in the *ostinato* should not be emphasized, lest they interrupt the flow of the music. As a result, performers not only should focus on the melody of the right hand but also be aware that the *ostinato* is evenly played. At measure 128, the accents on the *ostinato* can be stressed more, creating a compact and syncopated feel. When the dramatic pause arrives, performers should make sure no sound is sustained in order to effectively initiate the coda.

The coda section is in a percussive style and starts from the low register, starting another climb up the keyboard. Although the volume is marked *mezzo piano*, both hands should be firm, not soft, since the accents on both should be carefully stressed. A delicate fingertip touch should be used on the keys for these accents, especially with the top voice of the right hand. When the music's dynamics reaches its peak with a tone cluster, the sharp sonority needs to remain for one more beat and is then followed by the lyrical melody played in a whisper. The hints of Beijing

Opera return again, and finger pad should be used in order to build a smooth phrase. As this beautiful phrase ends with a chord, performers should sustain the sound and let the last cheer of Duo Ye unexpectedly and dramatically end the whole piece.

CHAPTER 4

Ba Ban

Overview

In Chinese, Ba Ban means eight beats. Ba means eight, and Ban—also called Da Ban or large beat—is equivalent to a musical phrase. Hence, the true meaning of Ba Ban is eight large phrases. Ba Ban is an ancient tune, which dates back approximately two hundred years. It has been applied in various ensemble music arrangements, folk art, theater music, dance music, and ballade singing.⁹⁰ Although the original structure of Ba Ban is unclear, the common belief is that its basic melodic contour is as shown in Example 4.1.

Ba Ban has a twofold meaning in Chinese traditional music, both as a labeled tune and as a musical form. In regard to the tune, it refers to the music of varying length that utilizes the Ba Ban tune as a theme. Since the Ba Ban tune has been widely used throughout China for decades, it has various names in different regions, such as Ba Ban, Old Ba Ban, Six Ban, Old Six Ban, Eight Tones, and World Harmony.⁹¹ As for the musical form, it refers to a musical structure that has sixty-eight beats. The typical Ba Ban musical structure is made up of eight musical phrases. Each phrase has eight beats (a unit beat is a quarter note). The fifth phrase, though, includes an additional four beats, totaling twelve in all. Therefore, the total number of beats of Ba Ban is sixty-eight ($8 \times 8 + 4 = 68$).⁹²

⁹⁰ Jing-Yan Xue, “A Long-Standing Ethnic Musical Form in Chinese Traditional Music,” *Music Studies*, no. 4 (1984): 64.

⁹¹ Jing-Jing Bian, “Application of ‘Ba Ban’ Element in Contemporary Music Work” (M.D. thesis, China Conservatory of Music, 2011), 4–5.

⁹² Tao Li, “Chinese and Western Modern Music Language: The Interpretation of Multiple Structures from Chen Yi’s Orchestral Compositions” (PhD diss., Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 2009), 47.

Furthermore, there are four different types of rhythmic groupings in those eight phrases. Each groups starts with two or four eighth notes and ends in a quarter note. The combinations of beats in Ba Ban include 3+2+3 in the first, the second, and the fourth phrases; 3+2+3+4 in the fifth phrase; 4+4 in the third, the sixth, and the eighth phrases; and 5+3 in the seventh phrase.⁹³

	Phrase	Number of Beats	Grouping
	1	8	3+2+3-8
	2	8	3+2+3-8
	3	8	4+4-8
	4	8	3+2+3-8
	5	12	3+2+3+4-12
	6	8	4+4-8
	7	8	5+3-8
	8	8	4+4-8

Example 4.1. The musical phrases and rhythmic combination of Ba Ban.⁹⁴

⁹³ Xin Quo, “The Structure Principle of Using Chinese Folk Tunes (First)—The Second Phase of Chen Yi’s Compositional Style after Her Being in the United States,” *Journal of the Conservatory of Music*, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 52.

⁹⁴ Chen, “Tradition and Creation,” *Current Musicology*, no. 67/68 (Fall 1999): 66.

In Ba Ban, the location of the extra four beats has inspired many Chinese musicians and ethnomusicologists to speculate on its mathematical implications. Yaxiong Du, an ethnomusicology professor at the China Conservatory of Music, observed that,

. . . the structure of Baban corresponds to the mathematical proportion expressed in the Golden Section. In Baban, the additional four ban of the fifth daban [big beat or phrase] are numbered 41 to 44. Since the whole piece contains sixty-eight ban and 68 times 0.618—the Golden Section ratio—is 42.024 (or rounded off to 42), the point of division for the Golden section is right in the middle of the forty additional ban. . . . The resultant ratio of 5:3—a part of the Fibonacci sequence—is further evidence supporting this conclusion.⁹⁵

As Chen Yi studied the scholarly articles on Ba Ban, she learned more about how mathematical proportions could be found in both human society and nature, such as the designs found in some forms of architecture and the shapes of a nautilus and a butterfly. Chen agrees with Du, stating that if the order of the phrases is reversed, the Golden Section will lie on the two highest pitches.⁹⁶ According to Chen, “Because it reflects natural beauty and proportion, it is applied extensively in every field. In the course of several generations of performances of Baban, folk musicians must have transferred this natural feeling of balance from the visual arts and natural sciences to the form and rhythm of the music.”⁹⁷

Chen frequently utilizes either the thematic material or the formal structure of Ba Ban to compose pieces like *The Point* for pipa solo (1991), *Piano Concerto* for piano and symphony (1992), *Sparkle* for octet (1992), *Qi* for chamber ensemble (1997), and *Si Ji* for orchestra (2005).

⁹⁵ Yaxiong Du, “The Form of ‘Baban’: A Study in Aesthetics,” *Journal of Music in China* 1, no.1 (October 1999): 95. Note that some writers spell Ba Ban as a single word. I use the more traditional two-word spelling. In mathematics, two quantities are in the Golden Section or Golden Ratio if their ratio is the same as the ratio of their sum of the larger of the two quantities.

⁹⁶ Chen, “Tradition and Creation,” 66.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

In 1999, in celebration of the new millennium, Carnegie Hall commissioned Chen to compose a piece for piano. The work she created was *Ba Ban*. The sounds and texture that are heard in this composition are influenced stylistically by the singing style of China's rural mountains and the plucking style of traditional Chinese instruments,⁹⁸ such as the guzheng⁹⁹ and the pipa.¹⁰⁰ In addition, she writes:

Most Chinese folk solo pieces have a single theme each, with sectional developments in different speeds and performing techniques, with added decorations on the important notes from the melody. This inspired me to construct my solo piano piece in four sections, starting with the theme in the initial seven-measure phrase, which is based on the pitch material of the first phrase of the Chinese folk tune 'Ba Ban' (which means Eight Beats): B^b, B^b, E^b, A^b, G^b; D^b, E^b, G^b; E^b, G^b, G^b, B^b, A^b.¹⁰¹

Ba Ban is similar to *Duo Ye* in that it also uses a patchwork of small units to form an exquisite puzzle. This compositional technique originated with Beethoven. However, unlike *Duo Ye*, the minimal motivic materials in *Ba Ban* are derived from three *different* motives instead of just one. Chen prefers to draw the most distinctive intervals from each motive, blending them together. Therefore, this piano work exhibits greater diversity and a more atonal sonority.

In this piano work, Chen has designed three pitch collections. The first pitch collection is derived from the ancient Ba Ban tune (Ex. 4.2), which consists of a pentatonic scale. The other two collections are woven with the Ba Ban tune into the whole piece. The second pitch collection is a twelve-tone row: B, F, C[#], D, F[#], G[#], A, D[#], E, B^b, G, and C (Ex. 4.3). Upon closer

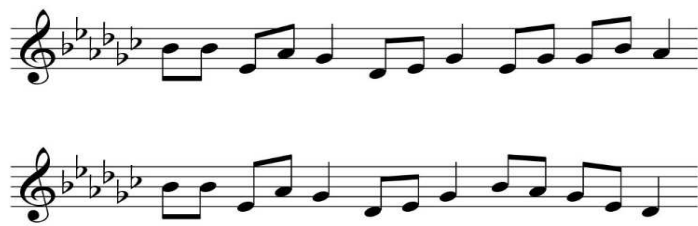
⁹⁸ Chen Yi, *Ba Ban*, (King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser, 2006), 1.

⁹⁹ The guzheng is also known as Chinese zither. It is a Chinese traditional string instrument with over 2,500 years of history. The modern guzheng has twenty-one strings and a length of sixty-four inches. The body of the guzheng is made of an empty wooden box, which acts like as a large resonant cavity. Its timbre is soft and expressive.

¹⁰⁰ Li, "East Meets West," 53.

¹⁰¹ Chen, *Ba Ban*, 1.

examination, a tritone¹⁰² assumes an important role in this sequence since this distinctive interval already occurs three times: B-F, A- D[#], and E-B^b. The third pitch collection is an ascending five-note motive: B^b, C, C[#], F[#], A (Ex. 4.4). This pitch material contains some characteristics related to a pentatonic scale. However, it also consists of some dissonant intervals, such as a semitone, an augmented fourth, and a major seventh. This pitch material combines features from both East and West, and it is also named “Chen Yi’s motive” by the composer herself.¹⁰³ The primary compositional technique in this piece is an almost tapestry-like application of fragments drawn from the pitch materials. Throughout this piece Chen has stated that all of the pitch materials “are used horizontally and vertically in primary or transposed forms, sometimes simultaneously in a phrase.”¹⁰⁴



Example 4.2. Pitch material 1: Ba Ban folk tune.



Example 4.3. Pitch material 2: twelve-tone row.

¹⁰² Tritone means an interval of an augmented fourth. It contains three whole tones.

¹⁰³ Bian, “Application of ‘Ba Ban’ Element in Contemporary Music Work,” 28.

¹⁰⁴ Chen, *Ba Ban*, 1.



Example 4.4. Pitch material 3: an ascending five-note motive.

Analysis

According to Chen, the formal structure of *Ba Ban* (Table 4.1) is a variation form. It consists of four sections. See the table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 Formal structure of *Ba Ban*.

Section	A	B		B1			C	
Structure	Theme	Tran.1	Var. 1	Tran. 2	Var. 2	Tran. 3	Var. 3 (New Var.)	Coda
Measure	1–48	48–63	64–97	98–111	112–145	146–156	157–232	233– 257
Length	48	16	34	14	34	11	76	25
Meter	3/4-2/4	2/4	2/4	2/4	2/4	2/4	4/4–2/4	2/4
Rhythm	Fast	Slow					Fast	

Section A: mm. 1-48.

At the beginning of *Ba Ban* the first pentatonic pitch material comes in the form of loud and slow octaves in very contrasting high and low registers. For Chen, it brings to mind the opening of a spectacular Chinese gate and creates a grandly spacious impression.¹⁰⁵ Although the first twelve measures are based on the first two phrases of the Ba Ban folk tune, in Chen's version they are improvised and embellished. These grace notes and ornamental passages imitate the plucked sound of Chinese string instruments. In addition, the four ornamental passages from measures 6, 8, 9, and 10 are arranged in atonal and pentatonic segments alternatively. This

¹⁰⁵ Shen, "The Asian Inspiration," 58.

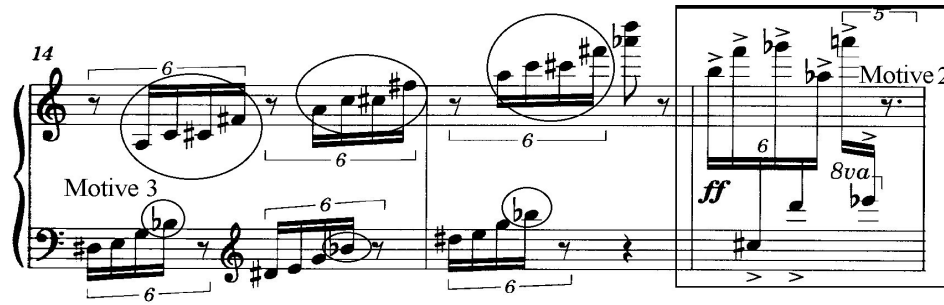
arrangement by Chen is a deliberate and quite obvious attempt to fuse traditional and contemporary musical material.

Example 4.5. Theme in *Ba Ban*, mm. 1–12.¹⁰⁶

The second and third pitch materials appear in measures 16 and 14, respectively (Ex. 4.6). Although the third motive emerges earlier, the labeling of motives is duplicated in the example below to honor the composer's decision.

At measure 14, the first example of “Chen Yi’s motive” (B^b, C, C[#], F[#], A) subtly appears, and the ascending five notes are shared by the two hands. The partial idea of the second motive follows, and is introduced in the high register, *fortissimo*, in measure 16. It is the first eight notes of the twelve-tone row, some notes appearing in reverse order.

¹⁰⁶ Chen, *Ba Ban*, (King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser, 2006), 2.



Example 4.6. Pitch material 2 and 3 in *Ba Ban*, mm. 14–16.

Performed with an *accelerando* from measures 12 to 17, the tempo reaches *allegretto* in measure 18. Meanwhile, the pentatonic scale rises again on the top of the chords in high register. The combinations of intervals in both voices are parallel fourths and fifths, enriching the melody and creating an Oriental sound. Although this pentatonic melody is not directly quoted from the first pitch motive, it is reminiscent the Ba Ban folk tune. The sonority also evokes another favorite: the percussion ensemble of the Beijing Opera. Moreover, Chen purposely arranges the right hand on the black keys and the left hand on the white keys, creating the effect of bitonality.



Example 4.7. Parallel perfect fourths and fifths in *Ba Ban*, mm. 18–29.

Starting at measure 30, the melody becomes atonal again. The first interval of the twelve-tone row, a tritone, is frequently used and is transposed to different pitch levels. In addition, a fragment of the second motive appears throughout the composition both horizontally and vertically. Sometimes it is in a single voice, and elsewhere it is divided in two. The melodic lines in both hands continue to climb, sweeping up the keyboard until the first climax at measure 45 (Ex. 4.8). The volume reaches a *fortississimo* while the two hands travel great distances. The dissonant diminished octaves (major sevenths) are played in turbulent triplets and dotted rhythms until an arrival at measure 48.



Example 4.8. The first climax in *Ba Ban*, mm. 45–48.

Section B: mm. 48-97.

Unlike the previous section, the transition evokes a calmer mood with a dreamy texture and color. It starts *andante* in measure 48 (Ex. 4.9), and the volume suddenly drops to a *pianississimo*. The first tone cluster in the left hand is the vertical presentation of the five-note motive, which is separated and scattered between two hands. Also, the rhythm here becomes amorphous with the groupings of triplets and quintuplets, adding to the transition's mysterious feel. At the end of the first transition (Ex. 4.10), the complete twelve-tone row first emerges in the bass clef and leads music to the first variation.

[illegible]

61

Complete twelve-tone row

The first variation starts at measure 64. Here, Chen successively merges all three pitch materials horizontally and vertically. The Ba Ban tune is presented in the top line of the chords in measures 64 to 66 and again in measures 68 and 69. At the same time, the dissonant chords, which support the pentatonic line, are drawn from pitch material 2. The first group of chords are built on the ten notes of the twelve-tone row, lacking only an F[#] and G[#]. The second group of chords, in measure 68, complete the vertical presentation of pitch material 2. Between these two groups, pitch material 3 is played as an embellishment. Also, the other embellishment at the end of this phrase draws material from the Ba Ban tune but in a different order of events. This delicate design reveals Chen's mature and sophisticated compositional techniques whereby she again fuses Western and Eastern musical elements.

Example 4.11. The first variation in *Ba Ban*, mm. 64–70.

After the *Ba Ban* folk tune finishes in measure 70, an atonal melody once again appears. The prominent intervals heard here are an augmented fourth and major seventh. These two intervals are among the striking features of pitch materials 2 and 3.

At measure 81, the pentatonic phrase reemerges. As with the first appearance of the pentatonic phrase at measure 18, the two parts are arranged in a bi-tonal fashion. Here, through the left hand not only focuses on the parallel fourths of the pentatonic scale, but also imitates the singing style toward in China's rural mountains. As this lyrical melody recedes at measure 85, the fragments from all three pitch collections are delicately arranged and alternately presented until the end of this section.



Example 4.12. The pentatonic phrase in *Ba Ban*, mm. 81–85.

Section B¹: mm. 98-156.

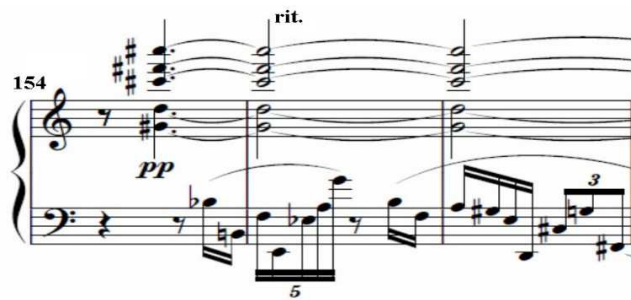
Section B¹ is very similar to section B. Section B¹, though, adds an extra transition—transition 3—and is longer overall. While there are a few subtle differences in interval constructions and in phrase shape, these two sections closely replicate most of the material from the first transition and variation. Unlike section B, section B¹ has a faster tempo and continues to accelerate as it moves toward variation 3.

In measure 112 and 113, a notable difference occurs at the beginning of variation 2 (Ex. 4.13). This time, Chen adds an embellishment derived from material 3 above the *Ba Ban* theme which brings brilliant color to the passage. As with the relationship between the first and second transitions, the rest of the musical patterns of variation 2 are intervallic transposed from variation 1.

Example 4.13 Variation 2 in *Ba Ban*, mm. 112–118.

Example 4.13 Variation 2 in *Ba Ban*, mm. 112–118.

Transition 3 begins at measure 146 with pickup notes and *forte* volume. The fragments of material 1 are also frequently used here, but they are loosely arranged and in different ranges. At the end of this section, two leaping musical sequences (Ex. 4.14)—which are mainly constituted by the intervals of a major seventh and tritone—appear in the bass clef. Meanwhile, the volume level is very soft, making for a mysterious effect.



Example 4.14 Two leaping sequences in *Ba Ban*, mm. 154–156.

Section C: mm. 157-257.

This section is a new variation (Ex. 4.15) of a theme that combines the fragments from all three pitch materials. Since the thirty-second notes are frequently appearing and the dynamic constantly changing, variation 3 produces much more energy and excitement than the first two variations. Moreover, the pace in this section steadily quickens. Tempo changes are marked in measures 170, 174, and 184.

Example 4.15 Variation 3 in *Ba Ban*, mm. 157–162.

At measure 166, a *cadenza*-like passage sweeps up the keyboard from the lowest to the highest register, both of which apply the fragment from the Ba Ban tune but at different pitch levels. While the upper voice presents D-G-C-B^b, the lower one acts in concert with G[#]-C[#]-F[#]-E. The distance between these two voices not only creates a dissonant sound, a tritone, but also a sense of bitonality.

After the *cadenza* section, a much thicker texture appears in measure 174. The intervals begin from a tritone and gradually enlarge to a major seventh, then finally reaching an octave in measure 176. Here, the volume is *fortissimo* and the fragments from all three pitch materials are interwoven (Ex. 4.16). These strong octaves create a surging momentum and the *accelerando* in measure 182 carries the music to a climax.

The musical score for Example 4.16 consists of three systems of piano music, measures 175, 177, and 179. Each system is written for piano with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The music is characterized by a dense, interwoven texture of three pitch materials: Material 1, Material 2, and Material 3. Material 1 is represented by a specific melodic fragment, Material 2 by another, and Material 3 by a third. The score shows these materials interwoven in a complex texture. Measure 175 shows Material 1 and Material 3. Measure 177 shows Material 1, Material 2, and Material 3. Measure 179 shows Material 1 and Material 3. The score includes dynamic markings like 'ff' and 'cresc.' and articulation like 'acc.'

Example 4.16 The fusion of three pitch materials in *Ba Ban*, mm. 175–179.

The music reaches a climax at measure 184 in a sequence of booming bass bursts in a quick tempo. The accented notes are drawn from the pitch material 2. This combination highlights the measure's primitive pulsation and evokes a state of excitement.

An example of rhythmic diminution is presented in an *ostinato* passage from measures 193 to 222 (Ex. 4.17). It is a continuously repeating six eighth-note figure that is adapted from the first six notes of the twelve-tone row. This skillful compositional technique by Chen is also utilized in the coda of *Duo Ye*. Here, though, the groups' *ostinato* pattern is followed by the first six terms of the Fibonacci sequence, 8-5-3-2-1-1. Meanwhile, the Ba Ban folk tune appears on off-beats in the upper voice. Occasionally, another Ba Ban tune, as a countermelody, occurs a major seventh below. These two iterations of pitch material 1 create a dissonant bitonal sound and present the crucial interval (the major 7th) of the pitch material 3 vertically.

193

f p

8ba. 8

198

8ba.

203

8ba. 5

208

8ba. 3

213

8ba. 8va. toco 2

218

8va. 1 1

Example 4.17 Application of the first six terms of the Fibonacci sequence in the *ostinato* in *Ba Ban*, mm. 193–222.

At the conclusion of variation 3 (Ex. 4.18), Chen applies fragments from all three pitch materials. The turbulent impulse rapidly sweeps across the keyboard with major sevenths and octaves, and then a tremolo appears in the extreme high register and rings for two measures at *sforzando* volume. This intense ringing is suddenly interrupted by a rest which occurs just before the coda. A similar rest can be heard before the coda of *Duo Ye*.

The image displays a musical score for piano, specifically measures 223 through 232. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 223-232) shows a complex interweaving of three pitch materials: Material 1, Material 2, and Material 3. Material 2 is primarily in the right hand, while Materials 1 and 3 are in the left hand. The second system (measures 228-232) continues this fusion, with Material 2 in the right hand and Materials 1 and 3 in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, as well as dynamic markings like *sfz* (sforzando) and *8va* (octave up).

Example 4.18 The fusion of three pitch materials at the end of variation 3 in *Ba Ban*, mm. 223–232.

Unlike variation 3, the entire coda section (Ex. 4. 19) is extremely soft and creates a foggy and mysterious atmosphere. It begins with a twelve-tone row in triplets, crawling from the lowest note to an extremely high register. Between measures 239 and 253, the repeating highest notes occur in triplets and are separated by the eighth rests. Upon further investigation, the grouping pattern of these highest notes are adapted from the rhythmic groupings of the Ba Ban folk tune. After this unique design concludes, the last climb is built, sequentially, from pitch materials 3 and 1. The dynamic is extremely soft, and the sound gradually disappears in the very high register.

semitones, tritones, and major sevenths. As a result, learning how to accurately play the irregular leaping patterns in a fast tempo becomes a formidable challenge. “Chen Yi’s motive” also possesses part of the pentatonic character of the Ba Ban folk tune, which is the main theme of this variation. It is most clearly demonstrated in the beginning of *Ba Ban*; most of the time it is buried by dissonant intervals and can only vaguely be heard. Although in most traditional piano music melodies must be voiced out from the most of the texture, here this is not essential to do. A complete understanding of this complex piece requires that the performer conducts a full analysis.

At the beginning of this piece, the opening theme mimics the singing style found in the songs of China’s rural mountains and uses a slow and *ad libitum* tempo. The right hand plays octaves in high register as a “call” in *fortississimo* volume, and the wrist should slowly lift up in order to allow the music to travel a greater distance. After three measures, the left hand plays the response with diminished octaves in a low register. It perfectly imitates the squeaking sound of a large, old wooden gate, just as Chen described. In addition, the volume needs to be controlled in the low register in case the call-response is not balanced.

After initiating the Ba Ban tune, the music quickens. The speed makes this portion particularly difficult to practice. The sextuplets are hard to connect, even with both hands, and one may need to practice slowly to achieve precision. The tempo reaches Allegretto at measure 18, and the pentatonic melody appears in the high register. This unique sonority of bitonality imitates the yunluo (a small, thin tuned gong) from Chinese percussion ensembles. Fingertips should be utilized in this part while the shape of the hands is steady. From measure 30, the melody line and the dynamic are repeatedly extended from short phrases and then both suddenly shrink. Here, the irregular jumping pattern requires agile fingertips. The last extension arrives at

measure 45 with *fortissississimo* and builds up to the festive climax. Remarkably, the extreme range and dynamic of measure 45 are used to the opposite effect in the next section.

Section B starts with a tone cluster in *pianissississimo*, and the atmosphere suddenly becomes dreamy and mysterious until the end of B¹. These two big sections are alike, as the tempo goes from *andante* and gradually quickens. The *accelerando* tempo is slow but steady. The specific pedaling marked by Chen for two bars creates a foggy sonority. The score is marked in detail, including *sforzandos* and other accents. Some dynamics appear unexpectedly, only adding to the mysterious and improvised feel of the piece. Here, the music keeps floating and the listener is only brought back to reality when the Ba Ban tune appears suddenly at the beginning of variations 1 and 2. Transition 3 also shares similar characteristics with the previous sections. At the end of section B¹, the extreme dynamic range and a *ritardando* create the quiet before the storm.

Variation 3 makes up the bulk of this piece. Although the tempo starts slowly, the music flows much faster in the quick notes. At the beginning, the sixteen-note septuplet with *fortissimo* suddenly changes the mood from serene to stormy. From measure 157 to 165, the rumbling sound of thunder can be heard. The rain starts when the *cadenza* arrives. This passage mainly consists of thirty-second notes, and the touch needs to be light to imitate the sound of raindrops. At measure 170, as the speed increase, the volume also increases, suggesting the arrival of the raging storm by measure 174. This octave section before the climax builds and grows intense, and represents the tempest and wild waves of the ocean. Performers need to have a delicate yet agile touch to play these octaves with speed, force, and accuracy. Also, the dynamic *crescendo* and *decrescendo* and the rise and fall of the melodic lines should imitate ocean waves.

The climax arrives at measure 184 with a pressing pulse in the extreme low register. The accented notes are drawn from pitch material 2, and they evoke excitement and energy. The musical style is primitive and vigorous in measures 193 to 222. It is reminiscent of a Chinese percussion ensemble. Chen utilizes rhythmic diminution in an *ostinato* section, which is followed by the first six terms numerals of the Fibonacci sequence. Meanwhile, the right hand plays the Ba Ban tune on off beats with major sevenths, jumping back and forth over the entire range of the piano. These substantial jumps can prove very difficult to practice.

In contrast to the festive feel of variation 3, the entire coda section is dynamically extremely soft. At the beginning, the crawling melody is played by both hands and is, at the same time, accompanied by a very fast tempo from the lowest pitch to the highest pitch on the keyboard. This sequence is challenging to learn. The bumping melodic line not only needs to be played in balance, but it should also be fast, clean, and soft. Slower practice with fine fingering is necessary to master the *legato*. The next passage follows the special rhythmic pattern of the Ba Ban tune. The right hand plays the repeating highest note lightly and steadily as one would do tapping out a sequence of Morse code. The texture is very thin, and the sound is distant. At the end of this piece, the last sweep is quiet as the final note disappears into the air.

CHAPTER 5

JI-DONG-NUO

Overview

Ji-Dong-Nuo is the name of a popular Chinese folk ballad. It also means quail in the dialect of the Yao ethnic group that inhabits southwest China.¹⁰⁷ This ballad is derived from the following legend:

..., there was a girl who loved singing. However, she became unhappy after she married, since she had to stop singing under the orders of her father. She became divorced because of her depression. On the way back home, she heard a happy quail singing on the hill, changed her mood, and broke out singing a beautiful song. Her husband was deeply moved and loved her again as before. The song has been passed on and given the title *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, to describe the beautiful story.¹⁰⁸

As shown in example 5.1, the folk tune Ji-Dong-Nuo is based on the pentatonic scale, and there are many dotted notes and ornaments in this ballad. Chen Yi explains her inspiration for the piece thusly: “My little piano solo piece was inspired by Ji-Dong-Nuo, drawing some pitch material from the folk tune, while keeping the characteristics of the girl [from the legend] and the style of Chinese traditional instrumental performance.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Jinxiu Yao Autonomous region, a remote and small county of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in southern China

¹⁰⁸ Information from Chen Yi, July, 06, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Chen Yi, *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, (King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser, 2007), 1.



Example 5.1. Folk tune of Ji-Dong-Nuo.¹¹⁰

Chen's *Ji-Dong-Nuo* for solo piano was commissioned by the Carnegie Hall Corporation and is the latest solo piano composition she has completed. The world premier was performed by classical pianist Emanuel Ax at Birmingham Symphony Hall, in England, on November 13, 2005. The following month, Ax debuted the piece in New York City at Carnegie Hall's Isaac Stern Auditorium.¹¹¹

Like *Duo Ye* and *Ba Ban*, *Ji-Dong-Nuo* employs intervallic units as musical building blocks. Yet this piano work emphasizes the Oriental elements and possesses a more lyrical feel. The Western components Chen does make use of have supporting roles and are assimilated seamlessly into the entire piece. This arrangement conveys a greater sense of unity. *Duo Ye* and *Ba Ban*, on the other hand, possess strong contrasting elements and the varied styles can be distinctly heard within different sections. In *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, Chen's compositional technique combines Eastern and Western influences seamlessly in small cells revealing a new musical approach.

Analysis

Chen utilizes the Ji-Dong-Nuo ballad as a main theme and extracts the essence of the folk tune to further develop different motives. Most of the motives are formed by the pentatonic scale

¹¹⁰ Information provided by Chen in an e-mail from July 6, 2016.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

and the intervals of perfect fourths and fifths imitate the singing of birds as well as the playing of Chinese instruments. *Ji-Dong-Nuo* for solo piano has as its foundation the pentatonic scale. Moreover, this piece also employs a whole-tone scale, and these two scales share the same first three notes (C, D, and E). As a result, Chen likes to start the melody in pentatonic and ends it with a whole-tone scale. Two other intervals play a major role in this piece: major and minor seconds and their inversions: major and minor sevenths.

Ji-Dong-Nuo is in free form, meaning the folk melodic material controls the overall outcome of the compositional structure. The development of the material, as far as formal structure is concerned, is sectional. The composition can be divided into the following sections, beginning with an introduction at measure 1. A new section at the tempo change in measure 18 follows. A chart listing the development of the sections is as follows:

Table 5.1 Formal structure of *Ji-Dong-Nuo*.

Section	A (Introduction)	B	C (includes tran. from mm. 89–101)	B ¹	D	Coda
Measure	1–17	18–49	50–101	102–132	133–156	157–169
Length	17	32	52	31	24	13
Motive	Theme	Motive 1 Motive 2 Motive 3	Motive 1 Motive 2 Motive 3 Motive 4	Motive 1 Motive 2 Motive 3	Motive 2 Motive 3 Motive 5	Theme Motive 1 Motive 3 Motive 4

Section A: mm. 1-17.

Section A can be divided into two large phrases with a bridge. The two phrases, taken together, form a pair of question-and-answer sentences, which are followed by a short bridge that connects to section B. The two voices in section A are played in unison and two octaves apart, exhibiting the simplicity and beauty of the Ji-Dong-Nuo folk tune. The tempo is quick and

played in a *leggero* manner, like a little bird. It starts at metronome marking 126 with the eighth note as the beat.

The first phrase of section A starts the beautiful theme borrowed from the folk tune and applies the pentatonic scale and is played *piano*. Soon after, this phrase rises and ends in measure 7 with notes from a whole-tone scale as the volume increases. This rising contour of the melody creates what can be understood as a sentence followed by a question mark. The answering phrase appears in a pentatonic scale immediately afterward at measure 8 with *mezzo forte* sound. It gradually falls with notes from a whole-tone scale and ends at measure 13 with *diminuendo*. These two large phrases form the main theme (Ex. 5.2) and contain numerous embellishments. Chen employs hallmarks of the Ji-Dong-Nuo folk tune (Ex. 5.1) in order to imitate the twisting vocal singing commonly associated with the Yao ethnic group. Moreover, by alternating the pentatonic and whole-tone scales, she creates an innovative sonority. The first and last notes of the main theme build a dissonant interval, a minor second (A and A^b). This interval and its inversion—a major seventh—are frequently applied throughout the piece.



Example 5.2. Main theme in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 1–13.¹¹²

¹¹² Chen, *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, 2.

The small bridge (Ex. 5.3) begins with an interval of a major seventh (A and B^b). A rising melody follows, starting with a C (using a pentatonic scale) and ending with a B (applying the whole-tone scale). These two notes form another major seventh. This melodic contour is similar to the end of the first large phrase. Chen takes advantage of this melodic contour and places it as a touchstone for the sections that follow.



Example 5.3. A short bridge connects to section B in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 14–17.

Section B: mm. 18-49.

The tempo decreases subtly from measures 18 to tempo 112. In section B, three motives are introduced, with the first two making up the majority of the section. Motive 1 (Ex. 5.5) begins in a high register. It is a quintuplet formed by thirty-second notes arranged in a descending manner that loosely follows the pattern of the pentatonic scale. This motive imitates the sound of a guzheng and creates a *glissando* effect. Occasionally, the first and fifth notes of motive 1 are arranged with the interval of a major seventh, much like the quintuplet in example 5.5. In addition, an inversion of motive 1 appears in measure 27 (Ex. 5.6), once again revealing Chen's flexible approach to her material.



Example 5.5. Motive 1 in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, measure 18.



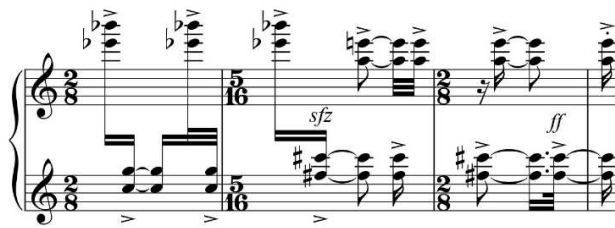
Example 5.6. Inversion of motive 1 in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, measure 27.

The second motive (Ex. 5.7) initially appears in measures 22 and 23, though it occurs throughout the piece, save for the main theme and coda. Although this motive seems percussive at first glance, it actually is *tremolo*-like. Motive 2 is primarily formed by perfect fourths and fifths, and the sonority mimics the song of quails. Meanwhile, the volume continuously alternates between *fortissimo* and *piano*, producing a wavy sound.



Example 5.7. Motive 2 in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 22–23.

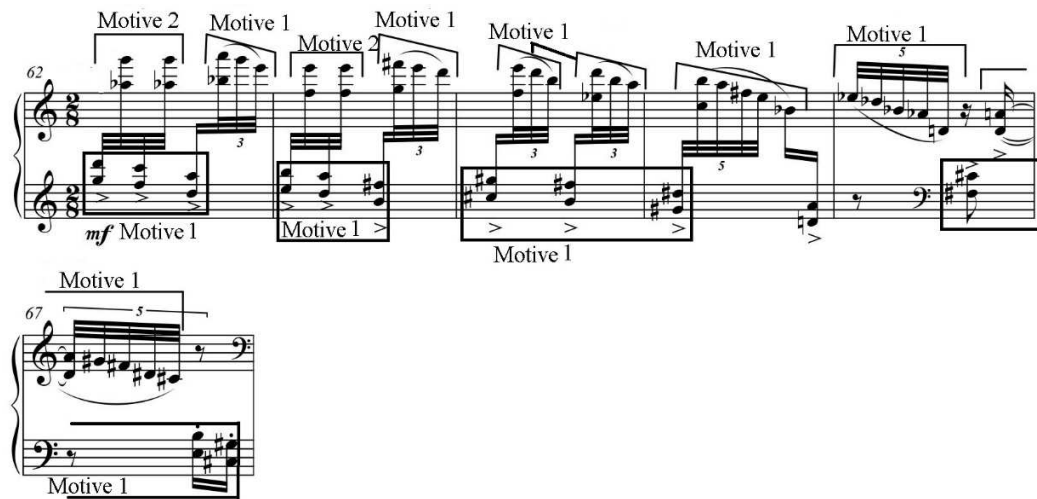
Motive 3 (Ex. 5.8) begins just before the small bridge that links to section C. It is similar to motive 2, but the unique rhythmic pattern is very distinct and impossible to mistake. The uneven meter creates the illusion of an embellished texture here. The accents on each of the fifth of motive 3 produce a more percussive feel, perhaps mimicking the hopping of quails.



Example 5.8. Motive 3 in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 43–46.

Section C: mm. 50-101.

In section C, certain motives intermingle with each other. For example, motives 1 and 2 are combined by linear motion from measures 62 to 67. The triplets and the circled fifths are the fragment of motive 1. Also, the major sevenths start to appear in motive 2 to create a sorrowful sonority. This falling passage symbolizes the depression experienced by the girl from the legend after her father forbids her to sing.



Example 5.9. Combination of motives 1 and 2 in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 62–67.

In addition, motive 3 appears five times in section C, the first three occurrences are in measures 50, 68, and 75. However, in the last two appearances in measures 86 and 94 the motives are inverted (Ex. 5.10)



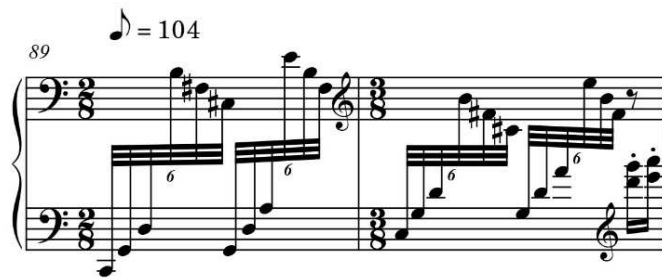
Example 5.10. Inversion of motive 3 in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 86–88.

At measure 80 (Ex. 5.11), a new motive emerges, but its original form is not presented until the following transition passage. This variation of motive 4 is a sextuplet formed primarily by perfect fourths upward, appearing just twice before the original form of motive 4.



Example 5.11 Variation of motive 4 in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, measure 80.

The transition (Ex. 5.12) begins at measure 89, and the tempo slows again a beat until tempo 104. The original form of motive 4 dominates this entire section. It is a sextuplet constituted by perfect fifths upward and perfect fourths downward. The variation of motive 4 occurs again at the end of section C before moving forward into the one that follows.



Example 5.12. Motive 4 in transition section in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 89–90.

Section B¹: mm. 102–132.

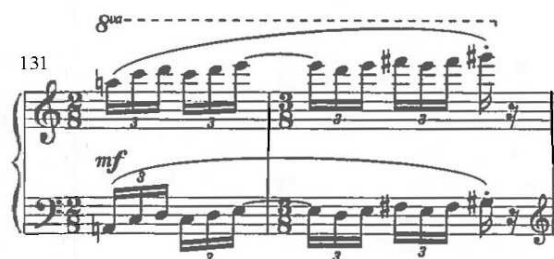
This section is very similar to section B in terms of length and the order of the motives. The only differences between these two sections involve several subtle changes and the intervallic transposition of motives. Chen's penchant for repeating and repurposing motives from prior sections is not only found here but is also reminiscent of her approach to variations 1 and 2 in *Ba Ban*.

In section B¹, the quintuplet begins much as it does in section B, but the accompaniment part adds a trill here. After a few bars, motive 2 appears and is formed by perfect fourths in measure 107. As with other sections, the motive symbolizing the singing quail still dominates.



Example 5.13. Section B¹ in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 102–106.

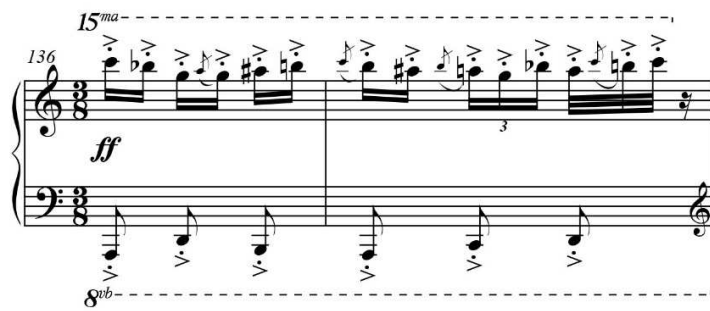
At the end of section B¹, a short link appears as it does in sections previous. Yet here the distance between the two voices expands to a width of four octaves. This approach lays the groundwork for the extreme range that follows in the next section.



Example 5.14. Link in Section B¹ in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 131–132.

Section D: mm. 133-156.

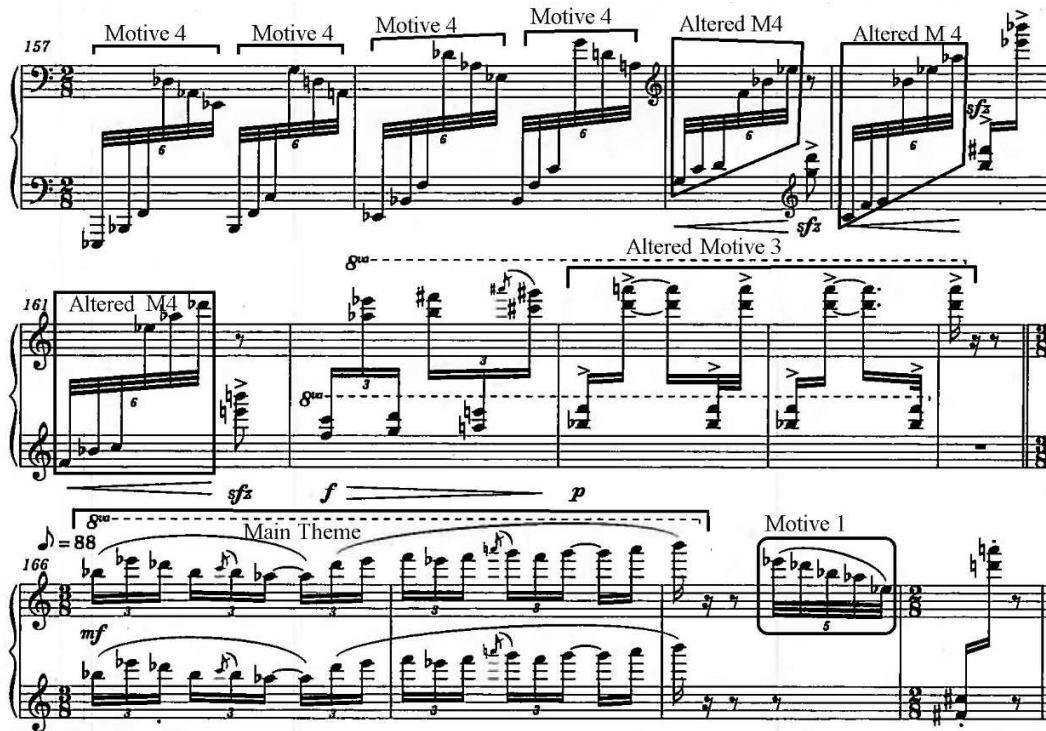
Section D starts with a brief motive—motive 2—before moving to a new motive (Ex. 5.15) in the extreme ranges of the keyboard. The bass of motive 5 utilizes the pentatonic scale and is difficult to decipher since it is buried in the lowest register. The sonority imitates the beating of drums and creates a joyous ritualistic atmosphere. Meanwhile, the voice in the highest register—which emulates the tweeting of birds—is an atonal melodic line featuring small intervals. Motive 5 alternates with the inverted motive 3 three times before transitioning to the coda.



Example 5.15. Motive 5 in section D in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 136–137.

Coda: mm. 157-169.

As seen in the codas of *Duo Ye* and *Ba Ban*, Chen plans her compositions to begin in the very low register and gradually shifts to a much higher one in the last sections. Not surprisingly then, *Ji-Dong-Nuo* (Ex. 5.16) starts from the lower bass in motive 4 before dramatically climbing upwards. An altered version of motive 4 then appears and ascends to the treble clef. The fifths in the very high register that follow gently rise as the altered motive 3 begins. In the last line, the tempo suddenly slows the beat considerably to tempo M=88, and the main theme briefly appears again in triplets, harkening back to the opening folk tune. Finally, the piece ends, in an understated fashion, with motive 1 directly followed by two fifths. The practice of inserting a short lyrical subject that is concluded suddenly by concise intervals (fifths or octaves) is also used in the last two measures of *Duo Ye*.



Example 5.16. Coda in *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, mm. 157–169.

Performer's Interpretation

Chen's *Ji-Dong-Nuo* conveys a sense of delicacy and gentleness as it imitates the singing and movement of quails. It also evokes the legend of a girl who loves to sing like a bird. Although the dynamic range is extreme in several places, the volume actually needs to be carefully controlled: it should not be too strong or too heavy. The performer's interpretation should focus on the characteristics of the work's main theme and five motives.

At the beginning, the lyrical folk tune *Ji-Dong-Nuo* materializes, and performers need to be aware of the staccato notes, accents, and the minor dynamic changes appearing in the score. Moreover, in order to simulate the petite quails, one's fingertips and wrists should be agile to better convey the grace notes that accompany much of the main theme.

In section B, the quintuplets appearing in motive 1 should be played in such a way that imitates the sound of the guzheng, the Chinese traditional string instrument. When motive 2 begins, revealing the extreme range of the dynamic, it is crucial to focus on the pedaling. Precise pedaling enhances the harmony and creates a *tremolo*-like feel. In addition, since the dynamic change of motive 2 imitates approaching bird song, it should be played with flexibility.

Motive 3 presents characteristics that differ from motive 2 and it begins to emerge at the end of section B. The sequence of motive 3 has accented notes with a unique rhythmic arrangement that creates a percussive feel. Although the motive is marked *fortissimo* at the end, the keyboard should be played delicately, evoking the movement of quails.

Motive 4 appears at the end of section C and has a primarily transitional function. The original as well as the altered forms of this motive create *glissando* effects, similar to that in motive 1. Since these two motives both imitate the sound of the guzheng, the performer should emulate the tone color of this plucked string instrument.

Motive 5 starts to show in section D. The location of the pitches are hard to recognize by ear and eyes since those notes are far apart occupying the highest and the lowest registers of the keyboard. Meanwhile, both hands play strongly *staccato* notes with the accents which create an unusual, quasi-African festive effect. Chen also arranges many grace notes in the melody of the right hand in order to imitate the quail's call. However, these grace notes are awkward to play and may impede the flow of the music especially since the rhythm is also constantly changing with ever faster note groupings. Thus, the performer should play the grace note and the melody almost together to avoid any delays. In addition, there always is a short rest at the end of the motive 5, and it easily produces a choking feeling in the music. The best way to prevent that

happening is to add a little pedal on the last note of the left hand. This pedaling also can help to promote the connection to the next phrase.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Chen Yi is one of the most influential female composers of the past thirty years. The three selected piano solo works examined here—*Duo Ye*, *Ba Ban*, and *Ji-Dong-Nuo*—not only represent her early, middle, and recent periods, but also show Chen's evolution, starting from her conservatory years to her current position as a world-renowned composer. *Duo Ye* (1984) is Chen's remarkable early stage piano composition, and it reveals her superb compositional skills that focus on developing the intervallic unit from a single pitch material into an entire work. *Ba Ban* (1999), in the middle stage of her career, explores more Western and contemporary techniques, such as using a twelve-tone row and ascending five-note motives. Although she continues to use the musical material from Chinese folk tunes, they are less pronounced in works like *Ba Ban*. As a result, this piece presents a more atonal sonority. Chen's latest piano work, *Ji-Dong-Nuo* (2005), is an exquisite, compact composition. She carefully adjusts the proportion of the Eastern and Western components and fuses them together seamlessly in a mature and even more natural manner.

In the process of analyzing *Duo Ye*, *Ba Ban*, and *Ji-Dong-Nuo*, it is clear that Chen likes to explore the extreme range of pitches and dynamics in her compositions. It is also evident that she is heavily influenced by the musical elements and techniques of folk tunes from her native China, including the singing style of the country's rural mountains, Beijing Opera, Chinese traditional instruments, and Chinese percussion ensemble. Although *Duo Ye*, *Ba Ban*, and *Ji-Dong-Nuo* each utilize different Chinese folk music tunes, the common element in all three is the

pentatonic scale. Since Chen applies different Western contemporary elements in each piece, these three works display their own unique characteristics.

The Western compositional technique that Chen most deftly utilizes involves the flexible development and combination of intervallic cells. This approach can be traced back to one of the most famous composers in the Classical era—Beethoven. Other contemporary techniques Chen frequently applies include bitonality, the whole-tone scale, and the twelve-tone series. Moreover, Chen alters the rhythmic structure in multiple ways: through syncopation; the shortening of rhythmic groupings; use of the Ba Ban folk tune’s rhythm; and utilization of “The Sum of Eight,” “The Golden Olive,” and the first six terms of the Fibonacci sequence, 8-5-3-2-1-1.

Chen’s success is attributable to her distinctive compositional style, which imaginatively merges Eastern and Western musical elements and instruments to create her own unique language. Chen’s numerous international awards are evidence of her tireless work ethic and passion for composing. What’s more, she serves as a mentor to her students, sharing experiences and teaching others that composition is about making bold innovations as well as celebrating music’s origins. Chen Yi’s contributions and accomplishments as an Asian female composer are an inspiration to musicians everywhere to boldly express their own unique gifts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Auner, Joseph. *Anthology for Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013. Print.
- Bian, Jing-Jing. "Application of 'Ba Ban' Element in Contemporary Music Work." M.D. thesis, China Conservatory of Music, 2011.
- Bian, Jing-Jing. "The Exchange of Explicit and implicit in Variation- the Application of 'Variant' of Ba Ban Tune in Two Compositions." *The New Voice of Yue-Fu: The Academic Periodical of Shenyang Conservatory of Music* 3 (2012): 64-72.
- Cai, Ren. "The Collision and Mingling of Eastern and Western Musical Culture- the Creation and Inspiration of Piano work 'Duo Ye'." *Musical Works* 6 (2010): 110-112.
- Chen Yi. *Duo Ye*. King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser. 2000.
- Chen Yi. *Ba Ban*. King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser. 2006.
- Chen Yi. *Ji-Dong-Nuo*. King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser. 2007.
- Chen Yi. "Tradition and Creation." *Current Musicology*, no.67/68 (Fall 1999): 59-72.
- Dai, Yao-Ting. *Constitutionalism-China: To See Chinese Constitutional Development from the Modernization and Culture Transformation*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012. Print.
- Deng, Yi-Jhih. "The Analysis and Performance of Duo Ye." *Discoures in Music: Gehai* 2 (June 2011):53-55.
- Du, Yaxiong. "The Form of *Baban*: A Study in Aesthetics." *Journal of Music in China* 1, no.1 (October 1999): 95-100.
- Feeken, Qing Nadia. "The Complete Solo Piano Works of Chen Yi: A Recording, Analysis, and Interpretation." PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2012.
- Guo, Xun-Chen. "Chinese Revolutionary Music System after 1949." *21st Century Bimonthly: Humanities World* 52 (April 1999): 119-124.
- Huang, Yi. "'Ji-Dong-Nuo' and the culture of Yao Minority." *Journal of Guangxi University for Nationalities: Philosophy and Social Science Edition* 25, no. 3 (May 2003): 87-91.

- Jhu, Jheng. *Anti-Rightist Movement*. Vol. 2. Taipei: Showwe international Co., 2013. Print.
- King, Liang. "Write a dream of homeland: Interview Chinese- American female composer Chen Yi." *Ming Pao Monthly* 36, no.8 (August 2001): 34-38.
- Lei, Vai-Meng. "Three Pieces by Contemporary Chinese Composers: Lam Bun-Ching, Chen Yi and Zhou Long." PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1990.
- Li, Feng. "The combination of national music elements and modern composing technique: the study of the creative style about Chen Yi's piano lude 'Duo Ye'." M. D. Thesis, Northwest Normal University. 2012.
- Li, Jie. "Structure and Cohesion: The Analysis and 'Numerical Control' Rhythm of Chen Yi's Piano Solo Piece Duo Ye." M. D. Thesis, Wuhan Conservatory of Music, 2012.
- Li, Songwen. "East meets west: Nationalistic Elements in Selected Piano Solo Works of Chen Yi." PhD diss., University of North Texas, 2001.
- Li, Tao. "Chinese and Western Modern Music Language: The Interpretation of Multiple Structures from Chen Yi's Orchestral Compositions" PhD diss., Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 2009.
- Li, Xiole. "Chen Yi's Piano Music: Chinese Aesthetics and Western Models." PhD diss., University of Hawaii Library, 2003.
- Liu Ching-chih. *A Critical History of Music in China*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2009. Print.
- Murphy, Michael. "Chen Yi: Composing to Honor Her Past." *The Choral Journal: American Choral Directors Association* 53, no.2 (September 2012): 28-34.
- Piñeiro, John de Clef. "An Interview with Chen Yi." *The New Music Connoisseur: The Magazine devoted to the Contemporary Music Scene* 9, no.4 (December 2001): 27-31.
- Quo Xin. "The Structure principle of Using Chinese Folk Tunes (First) - The Second phase of Chen Yi's compositional style after her being to the United State." *Journal of the Conservatory of Music* 3 (March 2009): 51-61.
- Raines, Robert. "Composition in the Digital World: Conversations with 21st-Century American Composers." *Oxford University Press* vol. 53, no. 3 (November 2015): 223-233.
- Shen, Chia-Ching. "The Asian Inspiration: Chinese Influences in the Solo Piano Music of Chen Yi." PhD diss., the University of Florida State, 2011.

- Stulman, Timothy. "A Cultural Analysis of Chen Yi's *Si Ji* (Four Seasons) for Orchestra." PhD diss., Bowling Green State University, 2010.
- Su, Jinhui. "From Classical to Popular Music: Discuss the Changing of Women's Role in Music." *Liberal Studies Journal: Philosophy and Practice* 3, no.1. (September 2014): 43-68.
- Sun, Chi. "The Formation of Chen Yi's Creation Aesthetics." *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute: Music & Performance* 1 (September 2008): 73-80.
- Wang, Anguo. "'Duo Ye' and Chen Yi." *People's Music* 7. (1986): 22-23.
- Xue, Jing-Yan. "A Long Standing Ethnic Musical Form in Chinese Traditional Music." *Music Studies* 4 (1984): 64-80.
- Yan, Fei. "The Flexible Application of the Juban Rhythm's Sequence by Two Piano Works." *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute: Music & Performance* 2 (February 2006): 37-43.
- Yang, Jing-Shang. "The food problem during the Great Leap Forward." *21st Century Bimonthly: Humanities World* 110 (December 2008): 38-51.
- Yang, Jing-Shang. *Tombstone: Famine Documentary in Chinese Sixties*. Vol. I. Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 2007. Print.
- Yang, Ling-Yun. "The Features of Piano Piece Duo Ye: The Combination of Modern Techniques and the Chinese Traditional Music." *Huangzhong* 4 (June 2002): 38-45.
- Yin, Hong-Biao. "Two major trends of the Red Guard movement." *21st Century Bimonthly: Humanities World* 13 (October 1992): 26-38.

VITA

Yun-Hui Lai, who was born in Yilan, Taiwan, is the daughter of Shang-Hao Lai and Li-Ming Huang. After completing her secondary-school work at Lanyang Girls' High School, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Piano Performance from Taipei National University of the Arts in 2004. She then enrolled at Chinese Culture University to pursue a Master of Music degree. Her area of concentration was Piano Performance and she completed the program in 2007. At that time, she wrote a master's thesis titled "An Interpretative Study of F. Chopin's Four Ballades."

From 2008 to 2011, she was employed as a piano teacher at Houde Elementary School in Taipei County. In August 2011, she continued her graduate studies at Louisiana State University. During her tenure there, she has expanded her repertoire to include contemporary music, and she has collaborated, as a Teaching Assistant, with many students and professors who offer classes in various subjects, such as dancing, vocal performing, conducting, and choral accompanying. She has received many commendations and favorable comments while at LSU. Yun-Hui will graduate in December 2016. The title of her dissertation is "The Analysis and Interpretation of Three Selected Piano Pieces by Chen Yi."